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PROSE HALIEUTICS

OR

ANCIENT AND MODERN

FISH TATTLE.

BY THE

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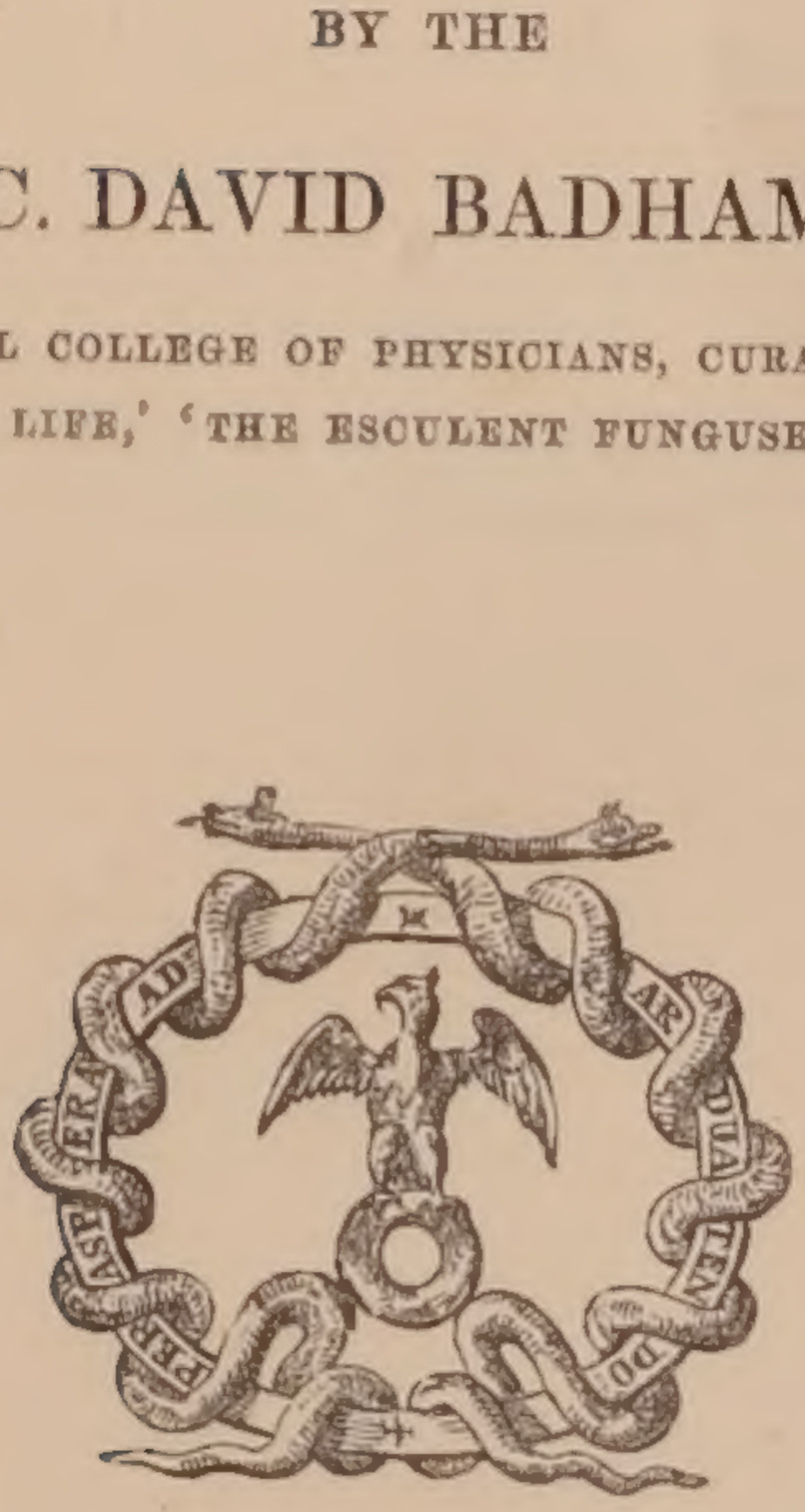

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TO

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THE FOLLOWING NOTICES, ON ANCIENT AND MODERN FISH,

ARE, WITH MUCH REGARD, DEDICATED,

BY HIS VERY SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

East Bergholt, Suffolk,
October, 1854.

ADVERTISEMENT.

MUCH of the matter contained in the following pages has already appeared in a series of papers in *Fraser's Magazine*. In collecting them at the suggestion of friends, for publication in a detached form, a good deal of new has been added to the original text. The title of the volume will, it is hoped, sufficiently explain the Author's purport; which is, to treat of fish *ichthyophagously*, not *ichthyologically*, and to give, not fish science, but fish tattle.

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PROSE HALIEUTICS.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT AND MODERN FISHING.

Elle étend ses filets, elle invente de nouveaux moyens de succès, elle s'attache un plus grand nombre d'hommes; elle pénètre dans les profondeurs des abîmes, elle arrache aux angles les plus secrets, elle poursuit jusqu'aux extrémités du globe les objets de sa constante recherche.—*Lacépède.*

FISH being more distinguished for the size of their heads than for the amount of brains lodged in them,* and affording consequently an easier capture than either beasts or birds, fell early victims to the crafts and assaults of their arch-enemy, man. Thus, even before the Babylonian captivity, as we read in Habakkuk, he 'took them with the angle, catched them with the net, and gathered them in his drag,'† and the following version of a passage from another prophet, alludes to yet more subtle machinations, and a larger array of engines employed against them:—

---

* The proportionate weight of brain to body in the shark is as one to two thousand five hundred; in the stupid thunny, only as one to three thousand seven hundred; and even in the comparatively well-endowed pike, but as one to one thousand three hundred.

† Αμφιβαλὼν ἄγει
πόντου εἰναλίαν φύσιν σπείραισι δικτυοκλώστοις
περιφραδὴς ἀνήρ.

And the fishers shall mourn and lament; all those that cast the hook into the river;
And those that spread nets on the face of the waters shall languish;
And those that work the fine flax shall be confounded:
And they that weave network.
And her stores shall be broken up,
Even all that make a gain of pools for fish.

Thus fishing from a remote period obtained as a *craft*:

Peter and Andrew fyshed for fode,
Some they solde, and some they sode.

And long before the Apostles' day, the same laborious primitive vocation was pursued in Sicily, and doubtless elsewhere:

Once, some few hours ere breake of day
As in their hut our fishers lay,
The one awaked, and waked his neighbour,
That both might ply their daily labour.*

But angling or fishing for diversion's sake was an afterthought, not likely to occur till the world was well peopled, and different states sufficiently prosperous and advanced in civilization to spare supernumerary hands, and allow the wealthier of their sons to follow less necessary arts than the primary ones of war and tillage.† The Greeks and Romans, civilized beyond the rest of the world, soon became enthusiastic sportsmen: neither nation, indeed, seems to have had a collective word, like our own, to designate the tribe generically; but we know them to have reared, not only bold huntsmen and keen fowlers, but also ardent followers of the gentler field sport. The existence of *togate* and *cucullate* proficients in the art of angling is competently attested, from the scattered hints of contemporaries, and from

---

* Theocritus.

† 'Il y a cette différence entre la chasse et la pêche, que cette dernière convient aux peuples les plus civilisés.'—*Lacépède.*

frescoes, gems, bas-reliefs, and coins; while the *ex professo* writings of the following piscatory poets, Numenius of Heraclea, Cæcius of Argos, Posidonius of Corinth, Leonides of Byzantium, Pancratias the Arcadian, and Seleucus of the 'no mean city' of Tarsus, though unfortunately lost to us, put this matter beyond dispute: as it would weary the reader, especially if he be not an angler, to hook in all the passages that might be fished out of Greek and Roman poets; which tell,

> Of beetling rocks that overhang the flood
> Where silent anglers cast insidious food,
> With fraudful care await the finny prize,
> And sudden lift it quivering to the skies :*

we shall therefore cite but two short ones, both from Oppian. Every fisherman has experienced the pleasant sensation of hauling safe to land a large fish after first well playing him: and all who have had this satisfaction will admit, that the lines in which the poet records Caracalla's sport in the Virginia Water of the Cæsars, whilst he stood by hexameterizing his success, convey—however unworthy they may be, in our free paraphrastic version, of that gold aureolus, or fifteen-shilling bit, per line which the emperor paid for them, —a lively reminiscence of what he has himself felt on some similar occasion.

> A bite, hurrah! the length'ning line extends,
> Above the tugging fish the arch'd reed bends :
> He struggles hard, and noble sport will yield,
> My liege, ere wearied out he quits the field.
> See how he swims up, down, and now athwart
> The rapid stream—now pausing as in thought;
> And now you force him from the azure deep :
> He mounts, he bends, and with resilient leap
> Bounds into air! there see the dangler twirl,
> Convulsive start, hang, curl, again uncurl,

---

* Homer.

Caper once more like young Terpsichore,
In giddy gyres, above the sounding sea,
Till near'd, you seize the prize with steady wrist,
And grasp at last the bright funambulist.

In the following passage, too, how graphically he describes the tussle between a trawler and a large anthia, hooked at sea!—

The fisher standing from the shallop's head,
Projects the lengthening line and plunging lead,
Gently retracts, then draws it in apace,
While flocking anthias follow and give chase:
As men their foe, so these pursue their fate,
And closely press the still receding bait.
Nor long in vain the tempting morsel pleads,
A hungry anthia seizes, snaps, and bleeds;
The fraud soon felt, he flies in wild dismay,
Whizz goes the line—begins Piscator's play!
His muscles tense, each tendon on the rack,
Of swelling limbs, broad loins, and sinewy back:
Mark yon fine form,* erect, with rigid brow,
Like stately statue sculptured at the prow,
From wary hand who pays the loosening rein
Manœuvring holds, or lets it run again.
And see! the anthia not a moment flags,
Resists each pull, and 'gainst the dragger, drags ;†
With lashing tail, to darkest depths below
Shoots headlong down, in hopes t'evade the foe.
Now ply your oars, my lads, Piscator bawls;
The huge fish plunges, down Piscator falls;
A second plunge, and lo! th' ensanguined twine
Flies through his fissured fingers to the brine.
As two strong combatants of balanced might
Force first essay, then practise every sleight,
So these contend—awhile a well-match'd pair—
Till frantic efforts by degrees impair

---

* Oppian has recorded elsewhere his idea of a perfect fisherman. Physically, he is to be well made, active, and athletic; in his moral character, he must be patient, vigilant, enterprising, and courageous, full of *dodges* and expedients,—in short, a Lazzarone in form, and a Ulysses in internal resources.

† Ἕλκων αὖ ἐρύοντα.

The anthia's strength, who drain'd of vital blood
Soon staggers feebly through the foaming flood,
Then dying, turns his vast unwieldy bulk
Reversed upon the waves, a floating hulk.
Tow'd to his side, with joy Piscator sees
The still leviathan; then on his knees,
With arms outstretch'd, close clasps the gurgling throat,
Makes one long pull, and hauls him in the boat.*

Nor was Oppian's royal patron the only pagan Pontifex who indulged in this art: Augustus was partial to it; Nero, as Suetonius instructs us, kept gold and purple nets to circumvent fish; and, so we may presume, angled for them as well. Antony was another purple angler, so fond of line-fishing, that he would follow the pastime for hours together,

And with his charming lady of the lake
Feast on the water with the fish they'd take.†

---

* Gay has given a lively and somewhat similar account of the capture, if we recollect right, of a large salmon:—

Downward he plunges with the fraudful prey,
And bears with joy the little spoil away;
Soon in smart pain he feels his dire mistake,
Lashes the wave, and beats the foamy lake:
With sudden rage he now aloft appears,
And in his eye convulsive anguish bears;
And now again, impatient of the wound,
He rolls and writhes his straining body round.
Then headlong shoots beneath the dashing tide.
* * * * * *
Till tired at last, despoil'd of all his strength,
The game across the stream unfolds his length.
The angler draws him to the boat with care,
And lifts his nostrils to the sickening air;
Upon the burden'd stream he floating lies,
Stretches his quivering fins, and gasping dies.

† Venus and Cupid were as great co-fishers from the same boat as Cleopatra and Antony; and a beautiful painting representing them so engaged was found in the house of the tragic poet at Pompeii.

Cleopatra, it seems, was the better sportsman of the two, and her superior skill sometimes tried the triumvir's temper not a little. On one occasion, when he had taken nothing, and was about to quit the spot, the Egyptian Queen, not yet wishing to put up her line,* gave a signal to a trusty diver to go down and fasten a fish upon her inamorato's hook; Antony, seeing his float bob immediately, struck, felt something heavy, and pulled out, to his confusion, and the delight of everybody else on board, a whacking stock-fish; which so set his *amour propre* against his improper love, that she had some difficulty in re-establishing peace.

Such was the love of angling in the days of Imperial Rome; *was*, and is not! The true sportsman spirit died, and was buried, with the contemporaries of the Cæsars, 'extrema per illos vestigia fecit.' Whether it be the spirit of malaria, or the divine do-nothing spirit, that has wholly quenched the sporting spirit in the breast of the modern Italian, we do not pretend to know; but that the race of anglers is entirely extinct, and the gentle art become a mere tradition at Rome and elsewhere throughout Italy, we certainly do. The eternal city is just as ichthyophagous as ever it was, and every one who can purchase a spigola or a mullet for his hebdomadal fasts, does so; and those who cannot afford 'pesce nobile' for dinner, are well content with

Greasy alose sputtering from the stall,

or any other plebeian species; but while thus, in one sense, all are 'fish that come to the net' at Rome, it remains to add, that whether of fresh or of salt water, they are, in a literal sense, also *net* fish: not a hook ever entered

---

* The *earliest* mode of taking fish used by the Nimrods of Egypt, and previous to the invention of either hooks or nets, was, says Mr. Moule, the *spear*, which we think doubtful, and at any rate requiring proof.

the lip of a single trout exposed in the Rotunda, or the Portico of Octavia,—they are all poached farios, snared or netted. A beautiful stream which murmurs just under the temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli is full of them (others intersect the Campagna, but *that* is a remarkable one); yet who ever saw a lazy Roman on its banks angling for amusement? he would sooner, in his indolence, whip his coat-skirts in the Chiesa Caravita every Friday throughout Lent, at the canonical hour for flagellation, than undertake such a walk to whip the Teveroni with a fly. A fly, quotha! show him one, and he wouldn't have an idea, nor care to learn, how to use it; and as to a fly-*book*,* if you wished to purchase one on the 'proscribed list,' you would have a better chance of obtaining it, for proscription enhances value, and secures some customers amongst the curious; whereas curiosity has no place here: the modern Roman's sole idea of this caccia is that of petty poaching, or of taking a rusty gun-barrel charged with dust-shot, to pop from a convenient ambuscade at a basking-fly in some shallow stream, and then carry off in his handkerchief such members as have been disabled by the discharge. As with the people, so with their popes, who, though certainly fond of *indulgences*, and recommended by their ecclesiastical code to follow that of angling, have never viewed fishing in this light; whilst in the teeth of the same canon, which proscribes the chase as a bloody and improper pastime for the clergy, popes cacciatori† have nevertheless existed. Surely

* The proprietor of a trout-stream near Lucca once described to us, very feelingly, how some Englishmen had bewitched his fish out of the water, with certain *imitations* of dead flies; which articles not being illegal, he said he could have no remedy.

† The last Leo was one of these gunpowder Pontiffs, who is yet remembered with gratitude by the old *fuocisti* of the Girandola, on account of the remission of a tax imposed by his predecessors upon that most woful of chemical combinations, charcoal, sulphur, and saltpetre.

this omission of a fishing bishop as successor to St. Peter, in a church which professes to follow so exactly the apostolic pattern in all things, is an extraordinary oversight!

England is the only country where the gentle art is thoroughly understood, and where everything around conspires to make men anglers, and to keep them so. Here in cheerful solitude Piscator may wander by the edge of the stream, and fear neither wild snake nor lurking crocodile; here he can 'retire at night with his few trouts (to borrow the pleasing description of old Walton), to some friendly cottage, where the landlady is good, and the daughters innocent and beautiful; where the room is cleanly, with lavender in the sheets, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall! Here he may enjoy the company of a talkative brother sportsman; have his trouts dressed for supper, tell tales, sing old tunes, or make a catch! Here he can talk of the wonders of nature with learned admiration; or find some harmless sport to content him, and pass away a little time, without offence to God, or injury to man.' Here too, in after-life, wherever he may have travelled and fished in the meanwhile, he will delight to return, (and if he be a true disciple of Walton) to re-visit the scenes of his angling boyhood: the banks of each well-known stream, the unchanged lake, the paternal pond, and the boat of auld lang-syne rising two inches in the boat-house to greet him—that dear old boat to which he used furtively to creep, and loosing her rusty and trusty chain from its moorings, confide his mistress's name, and the earliest efforts of his muse; or else, in some bright August day,

> When showers were short and weather mild,
> The morning fresh, the evening smiled,
> Would sit all day with patient skill,
> Attending to the trembling quill.

The mere sight of a fishing-line in after-life is ofttimes

sufficient, without the aid of any other accessories, to wake pleasant feelings of the past. 'Quels souvenirs touchans cette ligne peut rappeler,' as Lacépède touchingly writes: 'elle retrace à l'enfance ses jeux; à l'âge mûr, ses loisirs; à la vieillesse, ses distractions; au cœur sensible, le ruisseau voisin du toit paternel; au voyageur, le repos occupé des peuplades dont il a envié la douce quiétude; au philosophe, l'origine de l'art.'

Long has the art, immortalized by Walton, been naturalized in our country; and many of the quaint titles of fishing-books between two and three hundred years old, the recommendation of it by canon law to the clergy, as 'favourable to the health of their body, and specyally of their soules,' and the favourable report made of it by a canonical prioress, alike vouch, in obsolete English, for the prevalence of a pastime as much followed in times long past as in the present day: 'The angler at his lust hath his holsom walke, and mery at his ease, a sweete savoure of the meade floures that makyth him hungry: he hereth the melodyous armony of fowles, he seeth the yonge swans, heerons, duckes, and cotes, and many other fowles with their brodes, whych me seemyth better than all the noyse of houndys, the blastes of horneys, and the scrye of fooles that hunting fawkeners and fowlers can mayke; and if the angler take fysshe, surely then is there no man merrier than he is in his spryte.'* But the following elaborately beautiful poem, by Davors, published about two hundred and thirty years ago, in praise of this charming pastime, enters so fully into the arcana of its enjoyments and delights as quite exhausts the subject; we therefore commit it, 'simplex munditiis,' to our readers, 'ut indocti discant et ament meminisse periti.'

---

* Book of St. Albans, 1496.

You nymphs that in the springs and waters sweet
  Your dwelling have, of every hill and dale,
And oft amid the meadows green do meet
  To sport and play, and hear the nightingale;
And in the rivers fresh do wash your feet,
  While Progne's sister tells her woful tale;
Such ayd and power unto my verses lend,
As may suffice this little work to end.

And thou, sweet Boyd, that with thy wat'ry sway
  Dost wash the cliffes of Deighton and of Week,
And through their rocks with crooked winding way,
  Thy mother Avon runnest soft to seek;
In whose fair streams the speckled trout doth play,
  The roach, the dace, the gudgin, and the bleike;
Teach me the skill with slender line and hook
To take each fish, of river, pond, and brook.

Oh let me rather on the pleasant brinke
  Of Tyne and Trent possess some dwelling-place,
Where I may see my quill and cork down sinke,
  With eager bite of barbell, bleike, or dace,
And on the world and his Creatour thinke,
  While they proud Thais' painted cheek embrace,
And with the fume of strong tobacco-smoke,
And quaffing round, are ready for to choke.

Let them that list these pastimes then pursue,
  And on their pleasing fancies feed their fill;
So I the fields and meadows green may view,
  And by the rivers fresh may walke at wille,
Among the daisies and the violets blue,
  Red hyacinth and yellow daffodill,
Purple narcissus, like the morning rayes,
Pale ganderglas, and asor culverkayes.

I count it better pleasure to behold
  The goodly compasse of the lofty skie,
And in the midst thereof, like burning gold,
  The flaming chariot of the world's great eye;
The watry clouds that in the ayre uprold
  With sundry kinds of painted colours flie;
And faire Aurora, lifting up her head,
All blushing rise from old Tithonus' bed.

The hils and mountains raised from the plains,
  The plains extended levell with the ground,
The ground divided into sundry vains,
  The vains enclosed with running rivers round;
The rivers making way through nature's chains,
  With headlong course into the sea profound;
The surging sea beneath the vallies low,
The vallies sweet, and lakes that lovely flow;

The lofty woods, the forests wide and long,
  Adorn'd with leaves and branches fresh and green,
In whose cool brows the birds with chanting song
  Do welcome with their quire the Summer's Queen;
The meadows fair, where Flora's guifts among
  Are intermixt with verdant grass between;
The silver skaled fish, that softly swim
Within the brooks and crystall watry brim:

All these, and many more of His creation,
  That made the heavens, the angler oft doth see,
And takes therein no little delectation
  To think how strange and wonderfull they bee,
Framing thereof an inward contemplation,
  To set his thoughts on other fancies free;
And while he looks on these with joyful eye,
His mind is wrapt above the starry skie.

Such being the high calling of angling, no wonder if much be expected of one who professes it. The same writer accordingly claims for a real adept, this whole catalogue of Christian virtues,—faith, hope, charity, patience, humility, courage, liberality, knowledge, peaceableness, and temperance; while another worthy amateur gives the following finished account of his inner man, though, unlike Oppian, they both leave the outer man unsung:—'A skilful angler ought to be a scholar, to know how either to write or discourse of his art in true and fitting terms without either affectation or rudeness; he should have sweetness of speech, to entice others to delight in an exercise so much laudable; he should have strength of argument, to defend and maintain his profes-

sion against envy or slander; he should not be unskilful in music, that, whensoever either melancholy, heaviness of his thoughts, or the perturbations of his fancies, stirreth up sadness in him, he may remove the same with some godly hymn or anthem, of which David gives him ample examples; then he must be exceedingly patient, and neither vex nor worry himself with losses or mischances, as in losing the prey when it is almost at hand, or by breaking his hook by ignorance or negligence; but with pleased contentment amend errors, and think mischances instructors to better carefulness: he must then be full of humble thoughts, not disdaining, when occasion command, to kneel, lie down, or wet his fingers as oft as there is any advantage given thereby, unto the gaining the end of his labour; he must also be strong and valiant, neither to be amazed with storms nor affrighted with thunder, but hold them according to their natural cause, and the pleasures of the Highest; neither must he be like the fox (which preyeth upon lambs), employ all his labours against the smaller fry, but like the lion, that seizeth elephants, think the largest fish which swimmeth a reward little enough for the pains which he endureth; then he must be of a thankful nature, praising the Author of all Goodness, and showing a large gratefulness for the least satisfaction.' And such high characters as these may England boast amongst her angler sons. 'Dr. Nowell, dean of St. Paul's,'* says

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* Honest Walton makes a mistake here, and his error is copied by Gilpin and other writers; the Church Catechism in our prayer-book is *not* the one with which Dr. Nowell's name is connected; but another 'in Latin for the use of schools,' allowed and received by our church in the reign of Elizabeth. It is strongly recommended by Bishop Cooper in his 'admonition to the people of England,' and Whitgift says of it, 'I know no man so well learned but it may become him to read and study that learned and necessary book.'

Izaak Walton, 'who made that plain unperplexed form of words, the Church catechism, printed with our service-book; was an honest angler; nay, he was even content, if not desirous, that posterity should know it, which is evident from his picture now carefully preserved in Brazenose College, where he is drawn leaning on a desk with his Bible before him; on one hand of him lines, hooks, and other tackling lie around; and on the other, his angle-rods of several sorts, with this inscription, that he died 13th February, 1601, aged 95 years, forty-four of which he had been dean of St. Paul's church, and that age had neither impaired his hearing, nor dimmed his eyes, nor weakened his memory, nor made any of the faculties of his mind weak or useless. 'Tis said that *angling* and temperance were two great causes of these blessings.' Sir Henry Wotton calls the first 'an employment for his idle time, which was not then idly spent; for angling after tedious study, was a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness;' and he adds, 'that it begets habits of peace and patience in those who prefer and practise it.'

'There is something in the capture of fish, even when pursued as a trade, which tends to improve the moral, if not the intellectual character of those engaged in it, and brings them up for the most part, however unlettered, a patient, simple, humane, and hardy race; not insensible, in the midst of storm and danger, to the sublime feeling of dependence on a higher power, and preparedness to acknowledge and obey his divine will whenever revealed to them. 'They that occupy themselves in deep waters, see the wonderful works of God: indeed such wonders and pleasures too, as the land affords not! Of the Apostles, our Saviour chose four that were simple fishermen, whom he inspired and sent to publish his

blessed will to the Gentiles, and inspired them also with a power to speak all languages, and by their powerful eloquence to beget faith in the unbelieving Jews; themselves to suffer for the Saviour whom their countrymen had crucified, and in their sufferings to preach freedom from the encumbrances of the law, and a new way to everlasting life. This was the employment of those happy fishermen whom he chose from their irreproachable employment, and gave them grace to be his disciples, and do wonders;—I say, *four* of *twelve*, and it is observable that it was our Saviour's will that *these* four fishermen should have a priority of nomination in the catalogue of his twelve Apostles, as Peter, Andrew, James, and John; and then the rest in order. And it is yet more observable, that when our blessed Saviour went up into the mountain and left the rest of his disciples, and chose only three to bear him company at his transfiguration, that 'these three were all fishermen.'"

CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT FISHING-TACKLE.

'SHOW me your tackle and I'll tell you your sport,' is a laconic sentence, in which there is a good deal of truth. He whose fishing-book and head are both stuffed with subtleties and rare devices to ensure success, often finds it, to his mortification, to bear no relation to his apparatus or intentions. The heavy-armed *hoplitic* angler, as he may be called, returns generally from his expedition laden only with disappointment; whereas the true angler, who goes forth light and unencumbered in his accoutrements, secures his object, and returns heavy laden with spoil.

When Oppian enumerates

> Horsehair and hooks, the net and tapering reed,

as the sum-total of implements used in his day, he mentions, in fact, all that are essential for sport in any day;* we pause, therefore, a few minutes, to inquire into the

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* Cotton indeed gives a longer list; but he, we must remember, is speaking of the materials used for fly-fishing only:

> Away to the brook, all your tackle outlook,
> Here's a day that is worth a year's wishing;
> See that all things be right, for 'twould be a spite
> To want tools when a man goes a-fishing.
> To make all the flies for the several skies
> That shall rise in despite of all weathers,
> Your pouch must not fail to be cramm'd as a mail,
> *With wax, crewels, silks, hair, fur, and feathers.*

kinds and quality of these articles in days of yore. To begin with the rod. Very little about the make of this is accurately known: frescos, coins, and gems do not tell us much; and a specimen of the real article is still a desideratum in a museum of antiquities. One thing is pretty certain, that there were not, as with us, three sorts, corresponding to those different departments of angling, —trawling, fly, and worm-fishing, but one good at need for all purposes. The material used was either a perch of some light elastic wood, or else a reed—donax. As no mention is made of joints, we may presume it to have been of one piece, the length of which would of course prevent its being carried in a bag; brass ferules, spare tops, and a spear at the butt-end to fix it in the ground, are obviously after-refinements, and as there were no reels to attach, it would necessarily be unfurnished with rings.

The little that we have been able to collect about ancient lines may be stated in as few words: they were sometimes spun of hemp, sometimes of horsehair, perhaps also of byssus,* but certainly not of gut; and were finely twisted, as the epithets *εὐπλόκαμος*, *λινόστροφος*, etc. sufficiently indicate; finally, they were very short, often barely the length of the rod, which was itself shorter than ours. The angler at sea who used no rod, either wound his line round the left wrist, and manœuvred with the other hand, or else attached it to a boat-peg, *θῶμιγξ*, with a number of hooks disposed at intervals, in a similar manner to our hand-lines; but when he ventured small fish for great ones, only a single large hook, called *καθέτης*, was fastened to the end of it. Of the third

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* The stringy substance by which certain mussels and pinnæ adhere to the rocks. At Tarentum and in Sicily it has been for a long time manufactured into silken stuffs, or knit into fine gloves and stockings.

requisite to the angler's craft—fish-hooks—an abundant assortment, now in the museum at Naples, was disinterred at Pompeii; they vary extremely in form, size, and mode of adjustment, and are manufactured of two different metals; some, like our own, of steel (*nucleus ferri**) others, as we read in Oppian, of bronze,—

'His hooks were made of harden'd bronze and steel.'†

Owing to the maritime site of Pompeii, these hooks, being exclusively adapted for sea-fishing, are generally of coarse fabrication, large in size, long in shank, and flattened at the top to facilitate attachment to the line, like those used along our own coasts. Some of them are two-barbed (*διχαγλωχῖνες*), others are fixed back to back like eel-hooks, and fastened to wire, as in the modern gorge-hook, to prevent the game snapping the hair. Of those with a serpentine bend, which Plutarch recommends for amia fishing, 'as these great fish,' says he, 'manage to unhook themselves from straight ones,' we could find no specimens; nor (to pass from Brobdignag to Lilliput) of that other kind mentioned by Ælian, so small that anglers baited them, not with a fly, but a gnat (conops), which certainly carries the series of old Roman hooks downwards far below our minimum size, No. 13, whereon it would be impossible to impale a gnat. Some of the larger of these hooks are leaded, the leads being formed into conico-cylindrical lumps shaped like dolphins, and named Delphini after a certain rude resemblance to that fish. From the excellence of their hooks it is safe to infer (in spite of the absence of any direct informa-

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* Pliny.

† *Χαλκοῦ μὲν σκληροῖο τετυγμένον ἠὲ σιδήρου.* Observe the epithet *hard* applied to the *bronze*, not the *steel*, for the ancient bronze was made of tin and copper (not zinc and copper, as our softer alloy), and was so hard, that Pliny tells us it could be worked to represent the finest hairs of the human head.

tion of ancient authors on the subject, that their rods and lines, however simple, were of good material at least, and well made; and though, from the perishable nature of the substances employed, we have no positive evidence of the fact, it may be taken for granted, we think, that they would have sustained a comparison with those attractive displays of hickory and bamboo, which, stretching across the gutters of Holborn and Crooked-lane, bend on the least stir of air, to the mimic struggles of a pasteboard perch, and angle not unsuccessfully up and down the street for customers. The old sportsman (if he had not as copious a piscatory apparatus as the modern) had recourse at least to as many different modes of taking fish, which will best be seen by comparing the several resources of the art at these two different periods.

To begin with the tiptop of angling: fly-fishing was a mode of capture familiar to the Roman sportsmen.

> Who has not seen the *scarus* rise,
> Decoy'd and caught by fraudful flies?

asks Martial; and the following interesting passage from Ælian still more clearly establishes that

> Around the hook the chosen fur to wind,
> And on the back a speckled feather bind,

is no new, but a most ancient practice, resorted to two thousand years before Gay's distich was written; though Beckman has strangely overlooked it in his 'History of Inventions':—

The Macedonians (says Ælian) who live on the banks of the river Astreus, which flows midway between Berea and Thessalonica, are in the habit of catching a particular fish in that river by means of a fly called hippurus. A very singular insect it is; bold and troublesome like all its kind, in size a hornet, marked like a wasp, and buzzing like a bee. These flies are the prey of certain speckled fish, which no sooner see them settling on the

water than they glide gently beneath, and, before the hippurus is aware, snap at and carry him as suddenly under the stream as an eagle will seize and bear aloft a goose from a farm-yard, or a wolf take a sheep from its fold. The predilection of these speckled fish for their prey, though familiarly known to all who inhabit the district, does not induce the angler to attempt their capture by impaling the living insect, which is of so delicate a nature that the least handling would spoil its colour and appearance, and render it unfit as a lure. But adepts in the sport have contrived a taking device, 'captiosa quædam machinatio,' to circumvent them; for which purpose they invest the body of the hook with purple wool, and having adjusted two wings of a waxy colour, so as to form an exact imitation of the hippurus, they drop these abstruse cheats gently down the stream. The scaly pursuers, who hastily rise and expect nothing less than a dainty bait, snap the decoy, and are immediately fixed to the hook.

We should like to know something more of the salmonia (for some species of trout it certainly was thus caught) of the hippuric fly-fishers of Macedonia.

When it is recollected that they had neither fly-rods, fly-lines, reels, collar, gaff-hook, nor landing-net, the capture of any fish of size must have required very delicate manipulation, and the difficulty of effecting a safe landing have greatly transcended our own, who have all these appliances at hand.

Trawling at sea was another favourite mode of angling, and is repeatedly referred to by Oppian, who strongly recommends as bait a living labrax, if you can get one;* if not, a dead fish sunk and raised alternately, with a weight attached,—exactly as the modern trawler uses a roach, or gudgeon, on the common gorge-hook. The following is Oppian's description of a trawler preparing his line:—

He holds the labrax, and beneath his head
Adjusts with care an oblong shape of lead,

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* Ζωῇ μὲν κέρδιστον ἀνέλκεμεν.

Named from its form a dolphin; plumb'd with this
The bait shoots headlong through the blue abyss.
The bright decoy a living creature seems,
As now on this side, now on that, it gleams,
Till some dark form across its passage flit,
Pouches the lure, and finds the biters bit.

Besides killing fish in the more sportsman-like way of trawling and fly-fishing, the Izaak Waltons of antiquity condescended to bottom-fishing with lob or caddis worms;

Or, buried deep, with eggs prolific stored,
Would keep a carrion cat, of gentles the sure hoard.*

Harpoons were also in general use, and by means of these, many large fish were secured, napping on the surface of the water, or quietly nestling in the mud; some mosaics disinterred at Palestrina, represent men engaged in taking fish out of a reedy decoy, by means of small hand-nets;† they employed also divers pastes, equal to (and it would be hard to surpass) our own, for complexity of composition, and the truly surprising effects resulting from the different ingredients introduced.

That fish were attracted by strong scents, and would take a whole pharmacopœia of 'fetids' prescribed by a scientific practitioner, was indeed as well known to the poacher of early days, as now. Oppian speaks of 'myrrh dissolved in wine-lees;' and again, of 'certain drugs familiar to the sons of Æsculapius as well as fishermen, and turned to account by the latter in impregnating their nets,' as expedients that never failed. These substances entered into the composition of many fishing pastes, the recipes for which have come down to us.

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* Old angling book.

† The Egyptians are said to have used their mosquito-curtains as fishing-nets; but if so, the fabric could not have been fine enough to exclude midges.

They were of two classes, intoxicating and poisonous. Pliny records that all aristolochias yield an aromatic smell, but that one, called popularly 'the earth's poison,' is successfully used by the Campanian fishermen for the purposes of their craft. 'I have seen them use the plant,' says he, 'incorporating it with lime and throwing detached pellets into the sea, one of which was no sooner swallowed, than the fish, immediately turning over, floated up dead.* But the most interesting of these fish-poisons is unquestionably prepared from the cyclamen, or sow-bread, two species of which possess the property of drugging them in a remarkable degree, the C. hederæfolium and the C. Neapolitanum. The lazzaroni, from whom we first learnt the qualities of this plant, stated that they were in the habit of mixing it with other ingredients, in a paste they call *lateragna;* which is then either thrown in lumps from a boat, or enclosed in a bag, and thrust by means of a long pole among the rocks, when, if any fish are within smell, the crew are sure of a good haul; it was found, they said, particularly successful in the capture of cephali and generally of all low-swimming fish, whose nostrils come in more immediate contact with it on the ground. The following passage from Cavaliere Tenore's 'Neapolitan Flora' quite confirms the correctness of these statements:—

> The common people are well acquainted with the acrid properties of the cyclamen, which our fishermen, having properly pounded and prepared, drop into the hollows of rocks, where fish generally lie; they almost immediately becoming intoxicated, swim giddily about on the surface, and are easily taken. It is also a custom to fill a porous bag with the bruised bulb, and to throw it into holes along the sides of rivers or lakes, which drugs all the water in the vicinity.

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* The lime here was probably the occasion of death, though aristolochia may be a fish-poison. Even small quantities of lime thrown into a pond will speedily destroy the fish, as is well known to every poacher and poaching school-boy.

Oppian has ably described the deleterious workings of this very same plant, employed thus to catch fish sixteen hundred years ago:—

> Soon as the deadly cyclamen invades
> The ill-starr'd fishes in their deep-sunk glades,
> Emerging quick the prescient creatures flee
> Their rocky fastnesses, and make for sea,
> Nor respite know; the slowly working bane
> Creeps o'er each sense and poisons every vein,
> Then pours concentred mischief on the brain.
> Some drugg'd, like men o'ercome with recent wine,
> Reel to and fro, and stagger through the brine;
> Some in quick circlets whirl; some 'gainst the rocks
> Dash, and are stunn'd by repercussive shocks;
> Some with quench'd orbs or filmy eyeballs thick
> Rush on the nets and in the meshes stick;
> In coma steep'd, their fins some feebly ply;
> Some in tetanic spasms gasp and die. . . .
> Soon as the plashings cease and stillness reigns,
> The jocund crew collect and count their gains.

Notwithstanding all these appliances, however, had there been no more effectual means in vogue, the ancients would never have regaled, to the unbounded extent they did, upon the produce of the waters: all great takes of the finny tribes must be effected chiefly by means of nets; and with these, accordingly, we now proceed to show that even uncivilized nations of antiquity were amply supplied. There seems indeed little reason to doubt that nets are quite as old an invention as hooks, and possibly even of an origin anterior to them; both are mentioned together in the earliest records of the past; and though they may not have preceded all hooks, at any rate they were in use before *metal* hooks, and had been carried to a great perfection ere advancing civilization had introduced the fabrication of these last.

The nation of ichthyophagi, of whom Arrian, in his Indian History, furnishes some interesting details, were a people occupying a large tract of inhospitable shore

along the Persian Gulf, who, deprived by the barrenness of their country of all the more ordinary resources of subsistence, were ichthyophagous by necessity. Fish indeed was their only staple: they ate it raw, dried, or ground down in whalebone mortars, into fish-meal bread, to feed first themselves and then the cattle, not having any meadows or pastures for grazing; their bodies were protected from the weather by fish-skin dresses, and they lived in huts, the beams, rafters, walls, windows and doors of which were formed from the skeletons of leviathans, reconstructed and articulated anew. This wretched people, always on the verge of starvation, and entirely dependent upon what the waters supplied for shelter, covering, and food, although apparently indifferent to their uncomfortable position, or too apathetic to make any efforts at improving it, could exhibit a park of nets capable of covering, says their historian, two stadia, or a quarter of a mile of sea; and, what is more remarkable, these were not made of twine, for hemp and flax were unknown in the land, but from the inner bark of palm-trees; being, in fact, papyrus nets.* If these barbarians, really such, obtusely uninventive in all other matters for the amelioration of social life, and without even proper materials for the work, succeeded in manufacturing the noble apparatus of meshwork chronicled by Arrian, what perfection in the retiary art might we not expect in the hands of people so highly civilized, so subtle, and so fond of fish as the ancient Greeks and Romans? It would be easy here to spin a long yarn, *λίνον λίνῳ συνάπτειν*, sufficient to enclose both ourself and reader in all the detours of a vast, wide, intricate,

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* Other materials than twine are still used occasionally in the fabrication of nets: 'En Provence on fait quelques gros filets avec l'auffe; les Grœnlandais avec les barbes de baleine. Les Indiens de l'isthme de l'Amérique pêchent avec de grands filets d'écorce de mahot.'—*Lacépède.*

and perplexing inquiry; but, as we might fail to carry him buoyantly over, we will not plunge him needlessly into such a labyrinth. Oppian tells us, speaking of some of the larger enclosures, that

> Nets like a city to the floods descend,
> And bulwarks, gates, and noble streets extend.

This proves, which is all we care to do, that the ancients kept a magnificent stock of netting in their fishing depôts, and anticipated many, perhaps most modern improvements, even to the fabrication of the madrague itself; in further confirmation of the fact, however, it may be as well to cite the names and functions of a few mentioned by the same writer at the beginning of the third Halieutic. He might have added many more, but for the difficulty of weaving them into a poem; for, as he truly says,

> A thousand names a fisher might rehearse
> Of nets, intractable in smoother verse.

The first that he has hitched into his metre, is that called a *dictymum*, a word, like *δίκτυον*, derived from *δικεῖν*, to throw, and was originally, no doubt, some kind of *épervier*, or casting net, though subsequently used with less precision, to designate both hunting and fishing nets. From this word, Diana derives her epithet of Dictyna; and it enters into the composition of many words of piscatorial import, for which *vide lex. ad loc.* Next comes the *amphiblestron*, or *amphibole*, a net which, working round by degrees, at last enclosed its victims in a circle. Whether the net employed by Vulcan, on a memorable occasion, to the damage of his wife's and Mars' reputation, was an amphibole, is a question as keenly agitated by commentators as its importance deserves. A secondary meaning of this word is that rhetorical trick, by which, under cover of an *équivoque*, a wily debater takes unfair advantage of an

opponent, and reasons with him in a circle. The *sagenai* come next: these were like, if not identical with, the modern seines, and were of variable dimensions, sometimes of very great extent, stretching out many roods to seaward: occasionally, they were thrown entirely athwart a river, so as effectually to intercept and secure all fish coming up or going down the stream.* Into these sagenas were inserted, irregularly, a number of *cul de sacs* (sphairænai), which, bellying with the current, pouched every stray fish that might otherwise have contrived to escape. Besides these, there were *pezai*, a species of small dictymia; *hypochai*, small round nets; *gangamai*, or drag-nets, (whence comes *γαγγαμουλκὸς*, a dragnet-man, or dredger); *gryphai* and *kurtai*, traps of bent osier-twigs, placed in the course of streams at night, like our own bucks and weirs, and removed in the morning; and, to mention but one more, *panagreas*, or, as the name imports, nets kept in readiness to be made applicable for any mode of fishing. To this brief list, it would be easy to add many other names, and lengthen it out to at least double the present extent; but enough has been already said, to show that the ancients were thoroughly acquainted with the art of net-making, in all its branches, besides being well versed in every other mode had recourse to in these days for the piscatory craft.

The meshworks at present employed along the Campanian coast are not very numerous. At Naples, the lazzaroni informed us they only used three kinds—viz., la scheraia, a long, deep, double net, buoyed on large corks or barrels, reaching down some fathoms into the sea. and dragged on shore by approximating the opposite ends; la minuita, a single net of much less depth and

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* From the wholesale indiscriminate destructiveness of these sagenai, which make all prisoners alike, Herodotus has coined the word *sageneuein*, to express the condition of a city of which all the inhabitants are enslaved.

extent, which is let down perpendicularly, and catches the fish while attempting to swim through the meshes; and la volera, also a single net, to the upper part of which a raft of reeds is attached: it is chiefly employed in catching grey mullet, because these fish, on finding they cannot go through, always attempt to leap over the wall, and die on the other side. In many countries the craft of network is carried much further; and as no one has succeeded in conveying, in a few words, a better idea of its capabilities than Lacépède, we shall conclude with his enumeration of species. 'Filets, que la main d'un seul homme peut placer, soutenir, remuer, avancer, déployer, jeter, replier, retirer, ou qu'on traine comme les dragues et gangays, après en avoir fait des manches, des poches et des sacs, soit ceux qui présentent une grande étendue, élevés à la surface de l'eau par des coups legers et flottans maintenues dans la position la plus convenable par des poids attachés aux rangées les plus basses de leurs mailles; simples ou composés, formés d'une seule nappe ou de plusieurs réunies; résaux parallèles assez prolongés pour atteindre jusqu'au fond des rivières profondes et assez longs pour barrer la largeur d'un grand fleuve, ou déployant leurs extrémités de manière à renfermer un grand espace maritime composant une seule enceinte; ou repliés en plusieurs pares, développés comme une immense digue, ou contournés en prisons sinueuses, sont conduits, attachés, surveillés, et ramenés par une entente remarquable, par un concert soutenu, par des combinaisons habilement conçues d'un grand nombre d'hommes réunis. A cette classe appartiennent encore ces asiles trompeurs, faits de jonc ou d'osier, qui ne lui présentent lorsqu'il veut entrer que des tiges dociles, mais qui lui offrent, lorsqu'il veut sortir, des pointes enlacées, et le retiennent dans une captivité que la mort seule terminera.'

We proceed now to mention certain rather abnormal

procedures, by which the capture of some species was effected. Aristotle prescribes a very extraordinary bait for the fish *salpe*—which was a colocynth pill. Eels, on the same authority, are caught by throwing a strong-scented pickling-tub, with a narrow-mouthed net attached to the opening, into a river or pond; these fish, attracted to the spot by the smell, enter, and cannot get out again.* The male *mugil*, or grey mullet, was caught as faunists are in the habit of catching male moths, by using the female as a decoy: the practice was, to hook her through the lip, and allow a sufficiency of line to communicate with the male fish; after telling her story she was drawn back again, and all the males followed,—a shoal of admirers, we are assured, who, pressing close round her person, as a swarm round the queen-bee, were secured without difficulty. We transcribe Pliny's account of the matter, given in prose almost as glowing as the verses in which it is celebrated by both a Greek and a Latin poet:—

Mares autem non aliter quam homines, visa amica, furore libidinis perculsi, circa eam concursant, alius alium prævertere et circumtingere studeut: ut solent juvenes amantes aut oscula aut vellicationem aut aliquid aliud furtum amatorium venantes.

Talk of fishes being cold-blooded after that!

The mode of capturing the *cossyphus* is also remarkable enough to deserve a separate notice. The cossyphus, according to Aristotle, makes the best of mates, 'una contentus conjuge,' as good Roman husbands in the olden time were fond of recording on their tombstones; but if so, Oppian has taken great poetical liberties with his reputation, describing him as the 'Great Mogul' of the deep. According to this author, he possesses an immense gynæcium, sufficient to keep him perpetually in

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* Τιθέασι τῶν ταριχηρῶν τι κεραμίων, ἔνθεντες εἰς τὸ στόμα τοῦ κεραμίου τὸν καλούμενον ἰσθμόν.—Lib. ii. c. 8.

hot, albeit in cold, water. Having found suitable gîtes for his numerous females, he ascends the waters, and from a transparent watch-tower looks down into their bowers, an open-eyed sentinel, whose jealousy day and night never remits, not so much as to permit him to taste food. As the time for expecting a new posterity approaches, his anxiety, we are told by his biographer, knows no bounds:—

He goes from one to the other, and back again to the first, making inquiries of all; but as the pains and perils of Lucina proceed, the liveliest emotions of fear and anxiety are awakened in his breast. As some distracted matron in attendance upon a daughter during the first throes—throes so fearful to the sex—wanders in her agitation backwards and forwards, and suffers by sympathy all the daughter's pains in her own person, refusing comfort till she hears the joyful cry of delivery, so the agitated cossyphus roams incessantly about, disturbing the waters as he moves from place to place.

The fisherman, tracking these movements, drops a live bait properly leaded right over the thalamus of one of the ladies in roe; the cossyphus, supposing this an invasion of his seraglio, flies at the intruder open-mouthed, and is immediately hooked—his dying moments being further embittered by cruel taunts from the trawler, who, after the insulting manner of Homer's heroes, reviles him by all his mistresses, and bids him mark the seething caldron on the lighted shore, prepared expressly for his reception. His favourites, on losing their protector, leave their hiding-places; and getting, like other 'unprotected females,' into difficulties, are speedily taken.

A very singular mode of taking eels is thus described by Ælian:*

The artful eeler pitches upon a spot favourable for his purpose at the turn of a stream, and lets down from where he stands, on the high bank, some cubits' length of the intestines

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* Ἥδεται ὀρχήσει καὶ ᾠδῇ, καὶ ἄκουσας ἀνάπηδα ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης. —Aristotle, cited by Ath.

of a sheep, which, carried down by the current, is eddied and whirled about, and presently perceived by the eels, one of whom, adventurously gobbling some inches at the nether end, endeavours to drag the whole away. The angler, perceiving this, applies the other end, which is fixed to a long tubular reed serving in lieu of a fishing-rod, to his mouth, and blows through it into the gut. The gut presently swells, and the fish next receiving the air into his mouth, swells too, and being unable to extricate his teeth, is lugged out, adhering to the inflated intestine.

This is a much more ingenious device than the common practice of sniggling for eels with a mop of threaded lob-worms.

A mode of taking the scarus, in plan similar to that by which wood-pigeons are inveigled into nets at La Cava,* next deserves notice. When a large number of male scari have been attracted by a female hooked for a decoy, whose

Beauty draws them by a single hair,

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* Between La Cava and Naples, about half a mile from the town, are certain Bluebeard-looking towers, several centuries old, erected for the purpose of snaring wood-pigeons; with which view the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who are generally expert and practised slingers, assemble and man the towers in May. A long line of nets, some quarter of a mile in circuit, held up in a slanting position by men concealed in stone sentry-boxes placed here and there along the enceinte, is spread in front. As the pigeons are seen advancing (the time of their approach is generally looked for at early dawn, when they are making for the woods), the nearest slingers commence projecting a succession of white stones in the direction of the nets. These birds no sooner behold, than attracted, or alarmed (for the motive does not certainly appear), they swoop down upon them; and when sufficiently near to fall within reach of the nets, the persons holding let go, rush from their ambush, and secure the covey. Thousands of wood-pigeons are thus, we have been told by a proprietor, annually taken, and transmitted for presents to distant friends; as we used to send out game, before the sale of it was legalized. Thus birds as well as fish, and fish as well as man, often get entangled and caught in their headlong pursuit of a pleasure that still eludes them.

as in the case of the grey mullet, the fishermen pull away, and the scari follow the boat, flocking from all parts. When a sufficient shoal has thus been collected, the same female, now properly prepared and loaded, is dropped over a horizontal net stretched beneath the boat; she descends headlong, but not alone; a bevy of gallants rush after her in hot haste, head over ears in love one moment, and head over ears the next in inextricable meshes, where they stick till the boatman secures them.

Pliny's account of the capture of the anthia, which we give in the quaint words of Ph. Holland's translation (1665), deserves transcription, from the credulity it displays:—

When the time serveth there goeth forth a fisher in a small boat or barge, for certaine daies together, a prettie way into the sea, clad alwaies in apparell of one and the same colour, at one houre and to the same place still, when he casteth forth a bait for the fish. But the fish anthias is so craftie and warie, that whatsoever is throwne forth hee suspecteth it evermore that it is a meanes to surprise him. He feareth therefore and distrusteth; and as he feareth, so is he as warie; until at length, after much practice and often using this device of flinging meat into the same place, one above the rest groweth so hardy and bold as to bite at it. The fisher takes good mark of this one fish, making sure reckoning that he will bring more thither, and be the meanes that he shall speed his hand in the end. At length this hardie capitaine meets with some other companions, and by little and little he cometh every day better accompanied than other, until in the end he bringeth with him infinite troupes and squadrons together, so as now the eldest of them all (as craftie as they bee) being so well used to know the fisher, that they will snatch meat out of his hands; then he, espying his time, putteth forth an hook with a bait, and speedily with a quick and nimble hand whippeth them out of the water, and giveth them one after another to his companion in the ship—who ever, as they be snatched up, fetcheth them in a coarse twille or covering, and keepes them sure ynough from either strougling or squeaking, that they should not drive the rest away. The speciall thing that helpeth this game and pretie sport is to know the capitaine

from the rest, who brought his fellowes to this feast, and to take heed in any hand that he be not twitcht up and caught; and therefore the fisher spareth him, that he may flie and goe to some other flocke for to traine them to the like banket. Thus you see the manner of fishing for these anthiæ.

Though not strictly to the point, we cannot forbear the sequel:—

It is reported that one fisher upon a time (of spightful mind to do his fellow a shrewd turne) laid wait for the said capitaine fish, the leader of the rest (for he was very well knowne from all others), and so caught him; but when the foresaid fisher espied him in the market to be sold and knew it was he, taking himselfe misused and wronged, brought his action of the case against the other, and sued him for the dammage, and in the end condemned him. Mutianus saith, moreover, that the plaintife was awarded to have for recompense 10*l.* of the defendant.

Some fish, and notably skate, have, according to Elian and Aristotle, musical ears, and eyes that love the dance,—a fatal taste, which leads to their capture in the following manner. Two men embark in a boat, one with a fiddle, the other with a net in his hand. As soon as the violinist begins to scrape and caper to his instrument, the skate, attracted both by the dancing and melody to the spot, speedily become, like Horace's dreamer, so absorbed and entranced by the sweet sounds, as to be unconscious of the treacherous meshes meanwhile diligently drawn round them by the other fisherman. Thus a great take is sometimes effected, the skate making no effort to escape. We should not have cited this statement of Ælian had it been unsupported by other evidence, but it is singularly countenanced and confirmed by no less a person than the great French ichthyologist, Rondolet.

A somewhat similar mode of catching fish is had recourse to by the boatmen of the Danube, who arch across and keep tense upon strong stretchers hung with grelots, a floating net, and so ring in a great number of fish to

the tinkling of these bells. Tickling the ears of fish by music, with a view to their capture, suggests the mention of that more ordinary mode of tickling by hand resorted to in snaring trout, which is commemorated both by Oppian and Ælian as a very ancient device. Their account of the proceeding is, 'that men wade in the sea when the water is low, and stroking the fish nestling in the pools, suddenly lay hands upon and secure them.'

CHAPTER III.

VIVARIA.

ARTIFICIAL pieces of water, for the maintenance of fish, are very ancient inventions: ponds, with swimming live-stock, being exhibited in some pictorial relics of venerable Egypt. The precise purpose of these early vivaria is not clearly ascertained, but in after-times certainly, (and probably from the first,) there were two kinds, sacred and profane; the finny occupants of which met a very different destiny, according as they were to be mere viands for the table, 'mute' victims for the altar of the particular god to whom they were dedicated, or themselves the divinities to be inquired of and propitiated.*

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* Sacred fish are still to be found, in different parts of the world. Sir J. Chardin saw, in his travels in the East, 'fish confined in the courtyard of a mosque, with rings of gold, silver, and copper through their muzzles, not for ornament,' he says, 'but, as I was informed, as a token of their being consecrated. No one dared touch them, such a sacrilege being supposed to draw after it the vengeance of the saint to whom they were consecrated; and his votaries, not content to leave them to his resentment, took upon themselves to punish transgressors. An Armenian Christian, who had ventured to take some of these fish, was killed upon the spot by one of them.' Sacred fish also frisk about, occasionally, in the holy waters of cloistered monopolists; and Mr. Curzon, if we remember rightly, cites, in his late interesting 'Visit to the Monasteries in the Levant,' certain *fried* fish which were wont, to the consternation of strangers and the confirmation of the faithful, to make their fitful appearance, and to swim about with frizzled fins, secure from molestation, in an integument of sacred batter. But we need not go to the Levant

Martial makes mention of fish belonging to a sacred tank, which were too holy to be handled; Ælian of some kept in a stew, dedicated to Jupiter Militant, which few poachers would have had the hardihood to catch, and no discreet cook have presumed to stew; or as Varro, speaking of certain Lydian fish, held equally sacrosanct, pumingly puts it, 'hos pisces nemo coeus *in jus* vocare audet.' Polycharmus, in his 'History of Lydia,' says that in a grove on the sea-shore, consecrated to Apollo, usually sat a priest, to whom those who had any important matter in hand would bring two spits (to each of which were suspended ten pieces of meat, as a consulting bait), and, throwing them into the gulf, be desired by him to note what followed. As the water came rushing in, the observer saw on the back of the approaching waves 'an immense number of fish, enough to frighten any one, from their multitude and size.' Of some it was even necessary to take care, and keep out of the way, for amongst the mixed shoal were dire sharks, and whales, and hammer-fish, besides other monsters, of 'queer quaint shapes.' When the inquirer, on the bidding of the priest, had carefully recounted to him the kinds of the fish he had seen, the other was illumined

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to parallel this tale: a beautiful stained glass window in the Church of St. Neot's, Cornwall, is made to chronicle a legend quite as authentic and surprising. Three fishes swam in a sacred pool, and Neot had the divine permission to take one, and one only, every day, with the promise that this supply should never fail; but being afflicted with severe indisposition, his follower, Barius, caught *two* at the same time, and having boiled one and baked the other, brought both to his master. 'What have you done!' exclaimed Neot; 'lo, the favour of God will desert us; go instantly and restore these fishes to the water.' It is said that the saint prostrated himself in prayer till Barius returned to tell him that the cooked fish were disporting themselves in the pool! Barius again went, and brought only one; and Neot no sooner tasted of it than he was restored to perfect health!

to take up his parable, and to enucleate to the client his future destiny.

We have not succeeded in finding any notices of Greek vivaria, but a very noble one was constructed by the inhabitants of Girgenti in Sicily, for the tyrant Gelon: this was a reservoir, according to Diodorus Siculus, of many miles in circuit, and very deep, fed with *fresh* water, and stocked with fish. There can be no doubt, from this and from Moschon's account of Hiero's ship, which we subjoin, that the Sicilians, at any rate, were used to breed fish in preserves. The following are a few of the particulars recorded in Athenæus, of this interesting vessel. She was built at Syracuse, under the superintendence of Archimedes, and intended for the transport of corn; the timber felled on the sides of Ætna for the purpose, was sufficient for the fabrication of sixty common galleys. When Hiero had collected all the necessary planks, nails, cordage, pitch, and other materials for his purpose, he brought his artisans together, and set them to work. Archias was the master builder; three hundred carpenters, without counting helps, worked night and day at the sides. When the wooden walls had been reared to half the intended height, the hulk was launched by Archimedes himself, and the building finished on the water. She was a three-decker, and had twenty rows of rowers; the floors in all the rooms were mosaics, exhibiting a series of subjects taken from the Iliad, wonderfully executed; there was a gymnasium and an English flower-garden, a trellised vineyard and avenues of trees, to shade the walks on deck; an aphrodisium, inlaid with a rich assortment of Sicilian agates and cypress panels; an academic saloon, a library, ten stables on each side the gangway, and cribs, all along the ship's sides, for grooms, harness, and accoutrements. This wonderful ship contained moreover, near the prow, a large reservoir, made of planks, well caulked and

pitched, holding 21,000 gallons of water, under lock and key; by the side of this reservoir, and fed from it, was a pond, also made of planks, lined with lead, and carefully covered; it was filled with sea-water, in which a great number of fish were constantly kept.*

It is from the Romans, however, that our chief information concerning ancient vivaria is derived, and the copious details given us by Columella, Varro,† and Pliny, show that these ponds left little for posterity to improve. There are, says Varro, two sorts of stews, one supplied by fresh, the other by salt water: the first, in which advantage is taken of neighbouring land-springs, is the poor man's pond; the other, or sea preserve (where Neptune furnishes both the water and the fish), none but a very rich man can enjoy, for though pleasing to the eye, it is a very expensive speculation, and one much better adapted to empty the fabricator's purse (marsupium) than to fill his stomach; so that,

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* Ἦν δὲ καὶ ὑδροθήκη κατὰ τὴν πρῷραν κλειστὴ δισχιλίους μετρητὰς δεχομένη ἐκ σανίδων καὶ πίττης καὶ ὀθονίων κατεσκευασμένη· παρὰ δὲ ταύτην κατεσκεύαστο διὰ μολιβδώματος καὶ σανίδων κλειστὸν ἰχθυοτροφεῖον. τοῦτο δ' ἦν πλῆρες θαλάττης, ἐν ᾧ πολλοὶ ἰχθύες ἐνετρέφοντο.

† M. T. Varro was a vigorous old Roman Coke of Norfolk, who, in place of dallying with the Muses, at eighty, like Anacreon, turned his bald head to better account, and gracefully bequeaths, with youthful and affectionate gallantry, a practical treatise, 'de re rustica, ad Fundaniam uxorem,' with intent that she may make a good thing of her farm, when he shall have been removed from her; and, adds the old gentleman, in concluding his dedication to her, 'we have no time, my dear, to lose: if man's estate be, as we are told it is, a soap-bubble at the best, much it behoves an old fellow like me, whose eightieth birthday is at hand, speedily to put his house in order, before he departs out of life.' The veteran agriculturist then proceeds, in hearty prose, to give advice on every matter connected with agriculture, on tilling and cropping the ground, on the management of horses and cattle, of fowls and bees, and, lastly, on the advantages to be derived from economic *fish-ponds*.

in two senses, the fresh-water stew, which entails little outlay or trouble, may justly be called sweet (dulcis), whilst the sea-pond, in consequence of all the heavy outlays it occasions, deserved, also in a double sense, its epithet 'amarum,' or bitter. Some, however, herein more knowing than their neighbours, availed themselves of the public taste for fish to construct vivaria as a source of income; making the 'as in presenti' required in their fabrication yield a by no means inconsiderable paulo-post-future revenue by the sale of stock. Sergius Orata, in particular, who took his second name out of compliment to the fish which had lifted him to affluence, became a milliomaire by thus turning fishmonger on his own account; and though no others were so eminently successful, a good many who had sunk capital in stews, found them by no means a bad investment. In describing these stews we shall follow the order observed by Varro, in his enumeration of the expenses they entailed; these, he tells us, were of a tripartite character, each part making large separate demands upon the owner's purse: to quote the words of this author, 'they were expensive at once to make, to stock, and to keep up:'* that contingent on making the stew could not have been inconsiderable, for though one piscina, or common fresh-water tank, is held to be enough, says Varro, one plain piece of artificial sea-water is what no amateur ever dreams of. After going to a great expense in constructing, he divides and then subdivides it into partitions, almost as multilocular as a painter's box of colours, and in each compartment places some different fish or shell-fish: confirmatory of which, Pliny tells use that Fulvius Hirpinus had not less than *four* stews for winkles only, viz. one for the famous Rieti species,

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* Primum, ædificantur magno: secundo, implentur magno: tertio, aluntur magno.

conspicuous for their whiteness; another for the Illyrian brood, distinguished by their size; a third for the African variety, the most prolific of all; and a fourth for the Solitanes, commendable above the rest for their flavour; 'all these were lodged by themselves, and fed on such fattening pastes,' says Varro, 'that at length this proprietor succeeded in producing shells capable of containing four wine-gallons of liquid.'* M. and L. Lucullus are both set down by Hortensius as large artificers of stews, with this difference, that the former did not provide a suitable retreat for his fish in warm weather, a parsimony which brought his stews into general discredit; whereas L. Lucullus, who, after he had excavated noble ponds, in the matrix of the rock, judiciously gave the architect an unlimited command of his purse, with liberty to beggar him, if necessary, provided he took care to secure a shady grotto, to the refreshing coolness of which his beloved fish might always retire, for repose, whilst the dog-star raged, or whenever their instincts might see fit, succeeded perfectly in his undertaking, and even made Neptune jealous of his vivaria. The same liberal patron of architects, to feed a single fish-pond, cut through a mountain near Naples, to let in an arm of the sea, an operation which cost more than the villa reared beside it, and procured for him, says Pliny, from Pompey the Great, the nickname of Xerxes

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* Men took a great pride, he adds, in fattening their different coquillages, not so much, it seems, with a view to the increase of the malacology within, as to produce enormous shells: he mentions some very large ones; but it may be doubted whether all their pains and pastes succeeded in producing such bivalves as are found nowadays in India. The largest of these yet discovered is, we believe, a live shell tridacna gigas (to be seen at a small oyster-shop in Maiden-lane), the sides of which, more than a yard long, weigh not far short of *four hundredweight!* We recommend all our readers living near the Strand to go and see it.

in his long notes. Several illustrious fellow-citizens and fellow-labourers with Lucullus appear to have been equally acquainted with him, as long as they obtained their end, what the attainment of it might cost.

Columella enters much more into particulars than Varro, and we shall quote accordingly from his book, 'De Re Rustica,' directions as to the situation for forming, and how to construct, proper ponding places. He particularly recommends them in humble situations, where the soil is poor, and the returns small or none; in such situations they may be made to turn to excellent account.[a] More usefully, however, might not to be the only consideration in determining the site of a pond; several other things, as we shall presently see, should also enter into the account; but when these are present the best place to commence operations is so near

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[a] 'Plures hoc quæstus ratio quam voluptas hortorum commendabimus qui sive insulas, sive manticas agro mercatus, propter exiguum soli, quæ plerumque haud bonum est figuræ loco proposuerunt, et usui pulcrum præstabit.' Thus in former days men used to make large fortunes by the sale of their scaly stock. L. Crassus did not keep stews for the sake of having his table well fish, as Pliny informs us, but 'of a somewhat rebel and for more gain, since by this and such-like devices he gathered large fortunes.' In Germany the rabbits make more by their pelts than gentlemen's estates in England by their flesh and curds: and Leo Lucullus, deploring the loss of the legends in France, says 'they used to produce large revenues from a several warren now dried up with them. When that living agriculture was put a stop to, the earth seemed, no longer nourished with gentle moisture, gradually to lose its vigour and from their scarcity began to require increased labour and even then yielded less profit than formerly: the fattening measure which used to be spread over the soil had ceased, and other manure had to be bought and brought from a distance: and finally the various wild-fowl, in some places very remunerative, ceased to yield anything, so that much evil and no good has attended the 'abolition of our ponds.''

the sea that its waters may easily wash through, and never stagnate, 'thus imitating the great main whence they are derived, which never being of the same temperature, is in perpetual movement, and renewed every hour.'* They may be made of tiles, 'opus signinum,' or be excavated in the solid rock; in either case, in all such ponds as are not perpetually motionless and asleep, that extremity which lies furthest from the sea, and is deeper and cooler than the other, should conduct by straight or tortuous channels into a grotto where the scaly troop may retire from the heat of the day, like cattle, for refreshment and cover. The watery alleys leading to these places of repose should not be too broad for murænæ, which prefer a narrow nestling trough; some, however, object altogether to mixing murænæ with other stock, as they are liable to *go mad like dogs*, and in that case will bite, run down, and destroy every other species shut up in the same reservoir, till they have entirely consumed them. In feeding these reservoirs, the supplies of water should be let in from one side, and the issue, if possible, be made to take place at the one opposite; this will secure a perpetual renewal of the water, which is a matter of prime importance here; a convenient coolness being also of equal consequence for the salubrity of the fish, the deeper the source whence the sea-water is procured, the better; and wherever it is practicable the pond should fill itself from below. When the vivarium to be formed is scarcely above the level of the sea, its basin should be

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* Columella's explanation of this phenomenon, 'quoniam gelidum ab imo fluctum revolvit pelagus in partem superiorem' (since the cold and deeper strata of water rise naturally to the surface), is not true: the specific gravity of the water of the Mediterranean not being below 40°, the point of greatest density can have no tendency to the change here imputed to it: the lightness of ice perhaps led him into this error.

dug down about nine feet, and the conduit pipes placed about two feet from the top; they should be as capacious as possible, to admit sudden flushes of water, which will help the issue of the stagnant mass lying below the sea's level. Here it would be absurd to make those recesses and alcoves spoken of above, and always to be practised under favourable conditions: the water here is all too still already, and the further it is drawn out from the source of supply, the more stagnant will it become, and thus more harm will accrue to its scaly inhabitants from putrid water suffered to remain, than any conceivable degree of good from the cover it may offer against the heat, 'plus nocet putris unda, quam prodest opacitas.' In providing for the issue of the water from the pond, the 'exundation' is best effected by means of a brass grating, with apertures of a size sufficiently great to let it run freely out, but too small to allow the escape of the young fish. If the dimensions of the pond permit, it is no bad practice to remove fragments of rock, covered with seaweed, from the neighbouring shore, and to scatter them here and there in these little enclosures, in imitation of the open sea. As the gîtes of fish are very various, some lying on a bed of sand, some ambushed in mud, others feeding among rocks, your pond should be constructed according to the character of the sea in the neighbourhood; and finally, when the work is completed, a series of stakes should be planted in a semicircular form round that part of it which lets in the water. These must be placed above the level of the waves, so closely as to break the force of the impinging waters, and to keep out the wrack and weeds which would soon else fill the piscina. Having thus constructed and secured the pond against casualties, the next point should be to stock it wisely; for as on land all fields will not bear the same crops, just so is it in the vast acreage of waters; we must not think, for instance, be-

cause we find inexhaustible supplies and multiplication of mullet at large in the open sea, that we shall therefore succeed with them in a pond; on making the experiment, we shall have the mortification to learn that rarely one or two out of many thousands of these delicate fish will bear a pond life.* So, too, there is little use imprisoning fine exotic fish, whose requirements are not well understood: such stock may live indeed, but they will not multiply, and so are without profit. Sluggish mugils and the voracious lupus should be selected as easy to rear, as also turdi, and other saxatile fish of value. In regard to poor fish, we make, says Columella, no mention of them, since they are neither worth the capture nor rearing; but as all good fish do not thrive on the same bottom, study that which is prevalent along your own shore, and according as it is stony, sandy, or muddy, do you imitate these same peculiarities in your stew. An oozy bottom does best for flat fish, as soles, turbots, and plaice; such a pond, too, is the best nidus for all kinds of coquillages, oysters, scallops, the petuncles, (whence we derive our purples,) balani, and sphondyles. A sandy bottom, though not absolutely bad for flat fish, suits the pelagians (not heretics, but open sea fish, of the same name) best; such as *e.g.* anchovies, the

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* This remark only applies to ponds; not to fish 'sown,' as Pliny terms it, 'in the sea.' He tells us, the high admiral Optatus, under Claudius, brought, from the Carpathian Gulf, vast supplies of the hitherto unknown fish Scarus, and deposited it along the line of the Campanian coast from Naples to Ostia, where he continued to cruise about on the preventive service, inspecting the nets of the fishermen, and not suffering any scari that might have been captured to be retained till full five years from the time of the deposit. 'See,' says the Roman Buffon, after recording this transaction, 'how gluttony, and a desire to please a dainty tooth, have devised means to *sow fish*, and to stock the sea with strange bread.'

dentex, and Punic and indigenous umbras; while it is less congenial to the growth of shell-fish. The rocks, too, bring up a hardy race of their own, and where these are desired a rocky pond is necessary.

The ancients sometimes brought fish from a great distance, for the purpose of stock; generally, however, their sea-ponds were fed with species caught in the immediate neighbourhood; but the most extraordinary announcement in Columella is the fact that they turned lakes and rivers into natural vivaria, by carrying to, and depositing therein, not fish only, but the spawn of all such species as, though born at sea, are in the habit of penetrating some way up estuaries or streams. He speaks of the perfect success of the experiment in several rivers, which he names,—the Velinus, Sabatinus, Ciminus, Volsinius.

With regard to the diet of fish, continues our author, the flats (pisces jacentes) just mentioned—turbot, soles, and plaice— require a softer aliment than the saxatiles, having no teeth to bite their food, which they accordingly swallow whole: for the last, salt garbage, guts and gills of any little fish, or the pisciculi themselves, or the sweepings of the stalls, are particularly to be recommended; service-apples, figs, nuts broken in the hand, and above all (if the year's provision of the dairy permit), new cheese, may all, or any of them, be given; but no food proves so serviceable, by reason of its strong smell, to flat fish—as salt fish. Lying with their bellies on the ground, they are more guided by the nose than the eye; for though they see what is above them perfectly, all that is on the same level, whether to the right or left, they see not, and so may lose a dinner which depends only on eyesight; but once offer to their nostril the trail of a salt anchovy, and no other guide is needed than the scent. If, in consequence of the severity of winter, you cannot feed your fish high as

you could wish, slices of apples or dried figs may always be given, especially those of the better kind, Betic or Numidian. There are some who give nothing to their watery live-stock, but let them fare as they may, and fatten if they can. These persons are blind to their own interest; whenever such produce comes to market, all the world despises its leanness, and nobody will buy this skeleton or scavenger fish offered for sale—'macies enim indicat eum non esse libero mari captum, sed de custodia elatum; propter quod plurimum pretio detrahetur.'

Very different from this was the practice of C. Hirtius, who, having made twelve thousand sestertia by his stews, spent the whole sum in baits for a larger progeny of fish; and of Hortensius, too, of whom Varro relates 'that he not only was never entertained by his fish at table, but was scarcely ever easy unless engaged in entertaining and fattening them. To find suitable fare for his mullet,' says the same author, 'gives him infinitely more care and concern than me my mules and asses; for whilst I with one lad supply all my thrifty stud with a little barley and common water, Hortensius's fish-servants are not to be counted. He has sailors in summer, toiling to procure them bait; and when the weather is too coarse for fishing, then a whole troop of butchers and dealers in salt provisions send in estimates of terms for keeping his alumni fat. Hortensius so looks to his mullet as to forget his men, and a sick slave has less chance of getting a draught of cold water in a fever, than these favoured fish of being kept cool in their stew at midsummer.' Besides feeding the fish, there was an expensive functionary, the 'nomenclator,' or keeper, to maintain, who, in consideration of very high wages, gave his scaly charges their particular names, and taught all to 'wag their tails, fawn like dogs, and permit themselves to be scratched and clawed,' as he exhibited their

'*jewelled* heads' to admiring crowds 'who resorted to the ponds to see them fed.'*

Vast sums being thus sunk in keeping up these stews, it is not to be wondered at if their aristocratic owners were rather shy of making presents. 'My friend Hortensius,' says Varro, 'would much sooner lend you the carriage-horses from his stable to go and buy mullet where you liked, than send and procure you one out of his own ponds;' and again, 'It often happens in my friend Hortensius's house, when fish is wanted, that in place of levying it from his costly stews, he will send to Puteoli for supplies.'

Even Cæsar, in the days of his triumph, wishing to entertain his friends on fish, could only obtain from C. Hirtius six hundred lampreys, on the express condition that they were to be a loan repaid by a certain day, not in specie, but in weight and in kind.

Attachments of an extraordinary character, formed chiefly, on one side at least, through the medium of the nerve of smell, which is largely developed in fish, occasionally took place between these cold-blooded creatures and their master or mistress. One of the most remarkable on record is that formed between Hortensius and a lamprey, at whose death the orator nearly broke his heart, and became so morose and unpolite withal as to resent a friend's cajolery on his displaying so much tenderness for a dead fish, retorting with asperity that this would never have been his case, who was the survivor of seven wives, and had never shed a tear for one of them. Within the same pond, Antonia, the wife of Drusus, (unto whom the great orator's estate and grounds fell by inheritance,) entertained so great a liking to another lamprey 'that she could find in her heart to decke it, and to hang a paire of golden eare rings about the

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* Pliny.

guils thereof.' Many of the conscript fathers, too, and other eminent personages, were so much under fish fascination, that they thought no time or trouble too great, if they could but train some docile favourite to feed out of their hand; and that object once attained, they were wrapped in an elysium of delight.* Cicero called two of his friends subject to this delusion 'Tritones piscinarum,' tritons of fish-ponds; and 'piscinarii,' or stock-pond men.

The neighbourhood of Naples still maintains its vivaria; the finest are those at Caserta, which belong to the king. Here a magnificent reservoir, fed by mimic cascades, holds packs of immense hungry trout, who rush from the depths of their basin towards the margin on seeing anybody pass, making such a stir and plashing, and being withal so shark-like and impetuous, that even an angler is taken aback, and instinctively seeks protection by the side of the *custode*. It is strange to witness the evolutions of the fierce troop as they drag down the projected bait almost ere it reach the water, leaping at it with all the *acharnement* of dogs on a boar's back, and presenting so gaunt and famished an appearance, that the ghost of Vedius Pollio rises quite unconjured, and a thrill pervades the beholder as he wonders on what, or on whom, the Neapolitan despot may occasionally feed these audacious farios. *Here* there would be no difficulty to get them to feed out of the hand; the only difficulty

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* The pastime of feeding fish was not confined to civilized ancient Rome; it is in practice also among different tribes of modern barbarians, as appears from the accounts of several recent travellers, whereof one writes as follows: 'Fish are great favourites in Otaheite, and are fed in large holes half-filled with water. I have been frequently with a young chieftain when he has sat down by the side of a hole, and giving a whistle, has brought out an enormous eel, which has moved about the surface of the water, and eaten with confidence from his master's hand.'—*Ellis*.

would be to retract your hand in time, when they had got the bait; we only remember one more such fresh-water menagerie,—the pool of the well-named Wolfsbrunnen, near Heidelberg.

The age for fresh-water ponds seems to have gone by. There are, to be sure, one or two still to be found about the classic soil of Naples, where the air is for the most part pure; but elsewhere in Italy the fear of 'malaria has generally sealed them up, and wisely too, for it would be paying too dear a price for carp and tench to lodge them in pestiferous tanks, where the angler would at least have an equal chance of catching a fever as a fish.' The same fear, but not equally well founded, towards the close of the last century, induced the French, misguided by the eloquent declamations of Buffon, to fill up with as much earnestness as we are now exhibiting in spoliating the land of trees, every fish-pond within reach. 'Les étangs,' writes Lacépède in 1791, 'ont presque tous disparu de nos jours même, du sol de la France, quoiqu'ils y fussent autrefois en assez grand nombre.'* Those who at the time wrote against this wholesale demolition of what they justly considered as frequently an embellishment to scenery, otherwise sorry, found no sympathy, and were even denounced as a set of miserable fishmongering monopolists, who looked only

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* M'Culloch mentions that, in '1789, the annual supply of fresh-water fish in France was 1,200,000; that it fell some years back to 700,000, and has been diminishing since.' Is he speaking of the registered supplies furnished by the markets, or does he keep statistics of all the gamins who use fish-hooks throughout France, and receive from them an annual account of their proceedings, to add to the market account? Such figures are plainly of no value as records of the actual amount of river-fish consumed in any one year by our Gallic neighbours; but they are interesting, as, however imperfect, they tend to show that fish in France (like beavers and whales everywhere) were certainly getting low when the 'late new creation' of them began.

to their own interests and aggrandisement, regardless of the 'hygiène publique,' and at the expense of the 'grande nation!' In England's monastic days, before our sea-fisheries were what they have now become, and when the transmission of fish was most precarious and expensive, stews were *de rigueur;* but when we were at length emancipated from the thrall of Rome, and the tyranny of a forty days' penance upon lenten fare with nothing but carp at least twice a week in the larder, though there were plenty of geese in the pond, men by degrees used the privileges they had obtained, and converted their stews into arable and pasture land. That land has now become very valuable, and as ague has ceased to hold his court in Lincolnshire, and frogs to give evening concerts *sub dio*, it is not likely they will ever be reproduced.

The plan of stocking *rivers* with fish *ab ovo* has been, after the lapse of many centuries, revived by two Vosges fishermen, Gehin and Remy (Frenchmen, like dogs, do most things in couples), who have not only propagated salmon, carp, pike, tench, and perch; but declare that the procedure is applicable to all fresh-water fish, and to those which, though living partly in fresh water and partly in the sea, spawn in rivers. They have thus, by dint of natural sagacity (for they are uneducated men) re-established a very ancient practice, and succeeded in stocking the streams and rivers of a great part of France,—those in the vicinity of Allevard, Pontcharra, La Buisse, and Grenoble, in the department of the Isère; and others in the departments of the Allier, Lozère, Meuse, Haute Saône, etc., where either the original supply was exhausted, or where there had never before been a supply.

CHAPTER IV.

ANCIENT ESTIMATION OF FISH.

Hoc pretium squamæ ! potuit fortasse minoris
Piscator, quam piscis, emi. Provincia tanti
Vendit agros; sed majores Apulia vendit.—*Juv.*

WITH this brief notice we take leave of ancient vivaria and modern ponds, and proceed to point out the high esteem in which fish were held in the olden time, when, independent of culinary honours, they enjoyed immunities and privileges beyond every other class of vertebrated creatures.

Domesticated at Rome, and provided by their patrician entertainers with baths in the principal bedrooms, 'they swim about our cubilia,' says Seneca; 'we catch them under our tables.' Nor were fish forgotten in the amphitheatre: while the gladiators (*retiarii*) cast nets, and sought, like fishermen, to entangle their victims, these myrmillones (so called from the fish mormyrus, which they wore as a crest) advanced, and endeavoured with a trident to transfix the retreating foe. 'One favourite fish (the sturgeon) was paraded with much pomp in triumphal procession through the streets, moving to the sound of military music, with a crown on his head.' The Cæsars patronized them: Augustus wore a dolphin for his signet-ring, and after him a dozen of his successors struck fish on their coins. The mints of maritime Greece were equally *piscatory* in their devices; words*

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* As *thunnazein*, literally to harpoon a thunny; second meaning, to worry, teaze, or goad; *mainesthai*, from μαίνη or μαινὶς (the moon-fish), to go mad.

too of fishy origin were coined, and ancient literature drew from the same prolific source some of its prettiest similes, myths, and fables. They gave their names to towns,* islands, promontories, ships, and taverns: among precious stones, the sapphire (*scarites*) is indebted for its nomenclature to the famous parrot-fish scarus, after which the illustrious family of the same name was also called: two well-known species, besides the Orata and Murena, for example, gave theirs to other Roman patricians, just as our plebeian Sprats, Salmons, Pikes, Herrings, Chubbs, Rudds, and Roaches, are denominated from species familiar to our own ponds, rivers, and estuaries. But greater honours than these remain to be related: the first artists vied in representing them; Phidias' fish were as wonderful for the execution, as his Jove:

> Mark Phidias' fish group'd by yon stony brim;
> Add but a drop of water, and they swim.†

Arion rode one:

> A fiddler on a fish through waves advanced,
> He twang'd the catgut, and the dolphins danced.

Each deity was symbolized by some particular fish offered on his altar exclusively:‡ like the ox in Egypt, however, they were sometimes the victim and sometimes the god: thus the eel was the principal object of divine

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* *Φαγρόπολις*, *Λατόπολις*, cities famed for the supply and quality of their phagrus and latos.

† Martial.

‡ As the lyra or gurnard to Apollo, his own fish zeus, the dory, to Jupiter, the mullet to Hecate, boax to Mercury, the aphys to Venus,[1] and the mæna to Luna. 'Hence,' says Gesner, 'it would have been wiser to counsel one's friend who had a bee in his bonnet, to offer a mænee to the moon for his recovery, than to make him drink hellebore, or to send him on a voyage to Anticyra.'

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[1] Moule says the minnow, but plainly without any authority.

worship in Syria;* while in Bætica it was offered with the usual sacrificial crown and salted cakes to the immortals. In hieroglyphics fish represent all the cardinal virtues and half the vices of humanity. To the Christian they were early objects of interest and regard, being the symbol of the true faith, and often forming, with his initials, the only epitaph on his tomb;† for a like reason, effigies of the Virgin are frequently seen *in vesica piscis* between the Evangelists. One of the tribe is supposed, in Roman Catholic countries, to have received the indelible impress of an apostle's thumb; but lest this mark of favour should make the individual bearing it vain, the good St. Anthony preached, and afterwards published, a three-quarters-of-an-hour's sermon to the finny race collectively, who flocked round the preacher, and are reported not to have winked an eye while he instructed them in the whole duty of fish!

But it was on fish as viands, rather than as idols, oracles, or objects of sentiment, that the ancient world set most store. Some nations, as we learn from Herodotus and Arrian, were called Ichthyophagi; but these living, like the Greenlanders, where little else could be procured, became what the name imports from necessity; other people however adopted this diet from choice: 'we do remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt,' is the complaint of the Israelites in Exodus, from which it would appear that they preferred fish to freedom. The Egyptians themselves were noted for an addiction to

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* Cicero.

† The Greek word *ἰχθὺς* contains the initial letters of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour; and of the two lines of thousands of monumental stones that confront each other in lengthening vista in the long gallery of the Vatican, the Christians to the right are all distinguished by a fish, written or engraved, sometimes both, while to the left, 'Dîs manibus' supplies that Greek word, and a host of other devices supplant the fish.

fish, and though the priests of these harsh taskmasters of Israel abstained from their flesh; whether this arose from considering the natives of the Nile too sacred to be eaten, as Clement of Alexandria suggests,—or too impure from connection with the sea, as Plutarch has surmised, it was no doubt an act of self-denial on their part: and so largely did the watery race enter into the people's food, that we find recorded, as one of the plagues of Egypt, that God slew their fish.* The prevalence of this diet in the beginning of our era, throughout the civilized world and amongst all ranks, is proved, *inter alia*, by the secondary meaning of ὄψον† having superseded the primary: this word originally signifying cooked provisions generally, and then fish as the commonest of victuals. The proverbial expression also cited by our blessed Lord, 'If a son ask his father for a fish, will he give him a serpent?'—that is, if he ask for his daily and necessary food, will he give him what is noxious?—points out the universality of the practice of opsophagizing in no bad sense of the term; afterwards indeed it came to mean an addiction to fine and costly fish exclusively, and the word opsophagist degenerated into a mere piscivorous epicure. The notices furnished by ancient records, of all these worthies, would be far too long to cite; we shall therefore content ourselves with a few *ana* of some of the chief worshipers of 'Apollo Opso-

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* In the heroic times men required a strong aliment to fight on, and whatever their taste, Homer's heroes are all introduced in camp as raw-beef-eaters; which, next to black-puddings, was deemed

'the properest food
For warriors who delight in blood.'

† Thus the chance provisions of the poor, on which the divine bounty called for an increase—bread and fish—are by one evangelist called bread and ἰχθύες, which is the common Greek word for fish; by another, bread and ὀψάρια, in Latin, *obsonium*.

phagus,' who had a temple at Elis. Mention is made of a Syrian queen, Gatis, who kept all the best fish for the royal table, and issued proclamations by every town-crier in her dominions, that no one should eat fish ἄτερ Γατίδος,* without her queenly permission. Many poets, like Chœrilus, spent all their *muse* money in fish, and grave tragedians, like Nothippus, followed the example. Zeno, founder of the Stoics, was once dining at the house of a great fish-fancier, and on a noble dish being put before him, immediately seized it, and observing his entertainer look glum, (well he might, since it was the whole dinner!) 'what opinion,' said the philosopher, 'do you think your guests here must conceive of one who cannot indulge his friend for a single day in his well-known weakness for fish?' The dithyrambic poet, Philoxenus of Syracuse, after eating part of an enormous polypus, and being seized with indigestion, called in a physician, who urged him straightway to arrange his affairs, as he would not hold out till the evening. 'My affairs are long since settled,' sighed the bard; 'my dithyrambics, now as perfect as I could ever make them, I dedicate to the Muses who inspired them, and leave Venus and Bacchus my executors; but see, already Charon beckons, and bids me put into his boat whatever I may want in the transit; quick, then, as time presses, bring me the remains of my cuttle!' Hege-

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* This absurd derivation from a story as absurd, is properly ridiculed by Casaubon, who parallels it with another equally plausible; that of Jerusalem, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροσυλεῖν, on account of the destruction of its sacred site. The subsequent account of Gatis is, that she and her son Ichthys were thrown to the fish by Mopsus, the Lydian; and passing from martyrdom to the skies, she became a divinity, with an order of priests attached to her temple, who feasted daily upon stewed fish, presenting her only the incense of the gravy: votaries desiring her favour hung the temple-walls with gold and silver fish.

and hospitality with comments sufficiently contemptuous. The extravagance of one Cassiodorus, who sold his slave in the morning that he might sup on a murena, which ran away with the whole purchase-money, is the subject of a pleasant epigram of Martial:—

> No fish, insatiate! fills that maw of thine:
> 'Tis not on fish, but man! on man you dine!*

Great was the dread of diners-out lest there should not be a sufficient supply of obsonia at table, and even the size of a sturgeon did not always allay anxiety on that score. Cicero informs us, that when one of these ministerial *bonnes bouches* was presented to Scipio, whilst he was in the very act of inviting guests to partake of it, their mutual friend Pontius, sidling up, whispered into his ear, but loud enough for him to hear, 'Mind what you're about, Scipio, your fish will not hold out for those you have already invited. 'Tis but a small sturgeon that: acipenser hic paucorum hominum est.' It would be endless to tell of the expedients adopted by Romans, parasites or mistresses, to secure fish from their respective victims, but as some of the most amusing anecdotes of this sort are of *cinque-cento* antiquity, we shall give two of them the preference.

Leo X. would condescend occasionally to practical jokes, and once, for the sake of enlivening a party of friends at the expense of a notorious glutton, one Marinarius, invited him, in this waggish mood, to a lamprey feast; giving orders meanwhile to the cook not to buy lampreys, but to stew down some thick coils of rope in a

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* Exclamare licet, non est hoc, improbe, *non est*
Piscis, homo est, *hominem*, Cassiodore, *voras*.—*Mart.*

Whence, probably, the distich of the old Scotch song in 'Caller Herring,' and Sir W. Scott's striking adaptation of it in 'The Antiquary.' For other epigrams by the same author, on the same subject, *vide* Mullet.

sauce to which the said Marinarius was known to be partial. When this was placed before him, the cover removed, and the repast duly blessed by his Holiness, he at once attacked the treacherous cord, concealed and smothered in gravy, nor till his utmost efforts to sever the strands had failed, and the whole table was in an uproar of merriment, did he give up the attempt to carve it, and lay down his knife. Then, perceiving the trick that had been put upon him, 'I wish,' said he, with admirable presence of mind, looking towards and addressing his pontifical entertainer at the head of the table, 'I wish your Holiness would often condescend to practise such deceptions as the present; aided by such a sauce as this, I here pledge myself not only to eat up hemp cables, but to bite through iron chains!'

Jovius relates of a certain Tamisius, a famous epicure of his day, that having posted his servant *en quête* one whole night in the precincts of the fish-market, and learning from him next morning that a fine umbra had been sent by the fishmongers as a present to the chief magistrate of the city, he hied to his court on pretended business, but in reality to worm out the whereabouts of the fish; and finding it was now despatched to the chief banker, pursued it thither with no better success, the banker having transmitted it, meanwhile, to a cardinal client of his. After another hot and toilsome walk to his Eminence's palazzo across the Sistine Bridge, he had again the mortification to find the fish gone to a second lawyer; and proceeding to make the same inquiry at his bureau, learned that the umbra had been definitively sent to that gentleman's mistress. Thither the undaunted man proceeded, introduced himself, pleased the lady, and obtained, at last, for all his trouble, the object of it,—an invitation to dinner and a slice of the fish.

Professional services were often rewarded, and creditors sometimes appeased, by a seasonable supply of the

favourite article; and the famous 'vas pelamydum' was a fish-bribe of such potency as to tamper with the integrity of some of the highest functionaries of the law. It would seem almost incredible that any gentleman guest, however much he might fancy fish, should attempt to purloin them from his host's table, in order to eat them next day at his own, *ὄφρα οἱ οἴκαδ' ἰόντι πάλιν ποτιδορπίον εἴη*, had not Martial's experience proved it possible; as witness the following epigram:—

Forbear, my friend,
Those fish to send
Filch'd from my board away;
For *present* cheer
I asked you here
To dine with *me to-day*.

Some indeed, better mannered, thought it the hyperbole of ill-breeding to lay violent hands upon eatables at table, and more especially on a mugil's head;* but these Chesterfields were so small a minority, that they must either on dining out have done as others did, or have returned home fasting.

While the taste for fish was universal in the ancient world, the objects of it varied. Fickleness belongs to man, and 'say if thou canst, in what thou canst not change' is a challenge which no opsophagist would accept. Though both Greeks and Romans loved the finny race exceedingly, their constancy was that of the Turk to women, an over-addiction to the genus, but an exceeding fickleness with regard to the species.

With our ancestors no fish stood in such high esteem as the sturgeon, which we entirely neglect. Afterwards, according to Liberius and Cornelius Nepos, the labrax entirely superseded him; latterly, again, the scarus has taken, and still maintains, the

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* *Ὑπερβολὴ γαστριμαργίας τὸ ἁρπάζειν ἐσθίοντα, καὶ ταῦτα κρανίον κεστρέως.*

first place in the opinion of our belly-gods, who aver that no other fish will sustain a comparison with him.

So far Pliny. That the turbot, too, must have had his day, is proved amidst other evidence by the adage, *nihil ad rhombum*—'nothing to a turbot;' but people at length being sated of turbot, the dictum changed hands from the connoisseur to the fishmonger, who would sometimes quote it in vain. The 'skittish alose' also had a season, and, like that of other saltatrices, a short one. When eels first wriggled into public favour, is uncertain, but they long continued to wind themselves round the gourmet's affection. Perch took his turn in the market,—

> Nor famed of rivers shall my muse e'er slight
> Thee, worthy of the sea, our board's delight;*

and Galen having spoken of his tiny co-swimmer and co-partner in the stream, the gudgeon, as equally worthy of attention, the same poet at length appeared to sing his praises,—

> Tu quoque flumineas inter memorande cohortes
> *Gobio*, non major geminis sine pollice palmis,
> Præpinguis, teres, ovipara congestior alvo.†

The fancy for particular species was often confined to individuals caught in one locality; thus while a Tiber sturgeon, even in his palmiest days, would have been held cheap, a labrax caught anywhere else was held in no esteem. So discriminating were the patrons of good cheer at Rome, as to pronounce at a bite whether a given oyster was a native of the Lucrine Lake, or had come over, in the first instance, from remote Britain; whether their mullet were fed and bred in aristocratic stews, or were common 'lutarii,' that is, muddy plebeian pond-fish; whether their turbot were really from Ancona,

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* Ausonius. † *Idem*.

their scari from the Carpathian Gulf, their chrysophrys from Corinth, and their lampreys snatched from the Sicilian whirlpools; and woe betide the fishmonger of Imperial Rome who should have ventured to send out, or the cook who would have dressed, any other!

The physiological condition of fish, together with other circumstances in their economy, were also duly considered by the ancient world in estimating its goodness. Some were held prime only in roe; others in that state were looked upon as inferior, or even wholly unfit for the table.* Some, again, agreeably to that line in Ausonius,—

Nec duraturus post bina trihoria mensis,

were dressed immediately: others were considered to improve by keeping; of some the males were preferred to the females,†—in other words, soft were esteemed above hard roes, an opinion quite in agreement with modern taste; finally, old age, unless the barbel be an exception,‡ was not supposed to improve the quality of any species. In confirmation of the correctness of the general view, it is only necessary to taste old thunny, old sword-fish, and old sturgeon once, when few who can get young will ever repeat the experiment; so that Pope's famous line, beginning

Old fish at table——

seems as untrue in its initiatory clause as it is immoral in its concluding one.

A Greek was the only man to entertain an opposite opinion: 'Run to the market, sirrah,' says an Athenian to his slave, 'and get me fish for dinner.' 'What sort, master?' 'Why fish of a mature age, to be sure;

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* Arist. † Arist.

‡ Barbe Tu melior pejore ævo, tibi contigit uni
Spirantum e numero non illaudata senectus.—*Aus.*

none of your baby food for me.' The Greeks, indeed, appear to have been wholly indiscriminate, cooking every species, and occasionally paying most exorbitantly for mere carrion: the clean and the unclean entered not into their code of dietetics. With the finest perception of the beautiful in many things, the *kalon kagathon* in fish is what they had no more idea of than a seal or an Esquimaux, and their recorded opinion has reached posterity, that that flesh was finest which was most like fish; and, conversely, that fish to be preferred which was most like flesh.* The nations whom the Greeks and Romans called barbarians—that is, all the rest of the world—had a different *code culinaire*, often at variance with theirs; *e.g.* the Egyptians esteeming the coracinus—a fish detested even by the Greeks—as inferior to none in flavour; the Spaniards set high store upon their dorys, and colias mackerel, famous, as we shall see, in the preparation of fish-sauce; while the salmon, wholly unknown to the Greeks, and only known to the Latins as a foreigner,† was 'the pride of Aquitaine in France.' The remarkable Divine interdict obliging the Jews to abstain from certain fish as unclean, cut off from Hebrew tables many species in high esteem amongst surrounding Pagan nations; mackerel, thunny, eels, murænas, lampreys, and sturgeon, being defective either in fins or scales, they were not permitted to touch; and though they too, doubtless, had their predilections, we are not acquainted with them.

The ancients cooked fish in all the usual modes now

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* Τῶν κρεῶν, τὰ μὴ κρέα
Ἥδιστα, καὶ τῶν ἰχθύων οἱ μὴ ἰχθύες.
In accordance with which vitiated decision of the palate, we find them enjoying barbel, singing the praises of thunny, and smacking their lips over conger-eel.

† Pliny.

had recourse to; baking, boiling, grilling, frying, or stewing, according to their kind. The extempore sauces employed in the stewpan were very various; and that indefatigable *gourmet*, Apicius, has left a volume of receipts for making them, highly creditable to his taste and memory. They are chiefly of an agrodolce* character, and some are almost identical with that far-famed, thick, graveolent gravy, in which wild-boar and porcupine are still stewed down throughout Italy—constituting, in fact, the national dish. In this *farrago libelli* of Apician receipts, the following ingredients, variously combined, constantly occur:—wine, musk, vinegar, oil, honey, raisins, nuts, pine-kernels, almonds, lemon and orange juice, spices of divers kinds, bread, cheese, eggs, and a variety of pot-herbs, particularly parsley, marjoram, rosemary, and rue.

We shall cite here but one receipt for cooking, *en papillottes;* if the reader wants more, we refer him to the ancient Soyer himself:—

> Mix mint, pennyroyal, cummin, peppercorns, bruised nuts, and honey; pound all together, and of the mixture make a stuffing; fill your fish with this, stitch up the opening, then wrap in *paper*, and fry in oil over a moderate fire. Pour over it some alec and serve.

Thus the practice of dressing fish *en papillotes* obtained before such paper as we have was known. What would not these Romans have given for a single quire of British Bath, in days ere French paper-manufacturers had established themselves along the banks of the no longer '*tacitum* Liris,' and the Carteia di Fibreno, the present usual affix of the stationers in southern Italy, was a signboard yet undreamt of? The Romans how-

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* *Agrodolce*, as its name imports, is a blending of sweets and sours, and is made by stewing in a rich gravy, prunes, Corinth currants, almonds, pine-kernels, raisins, vinegar and wine.

ever were not so badly off for a substitute as might be supposed. Papyrus paper was by no means to be despised;* and after Fannius had taken the business in hand, the trade flourished, and old stationery turned over a new leaf. This Sieur succeeded, after many trials, in bringing the paper art to such perfection, that his name will stand endorsed upon it to the latest posterity. The following is a list of his stock in trade:—The Royal Charta Augusta, named after Augustus by his courtiers, and of course a first-rate article; the Livian, called after the empress, scarcely inferior in quality; the Saïtic letter-paper, so called from an ancient city, the *Bath* of Egypt, which was less fine than these; the Amphitheatric, or advertising play-bill sheet, of a much coarser texture, from the outer bark; the Taniotica, or packing paper, made expressly for this purpose, and sold by weight; the Emporetic, or shop-paper, not so coarse as the last, serving for wrapping up groceries, fruits, etc.; all these, together with the maker's own kind, the Fannian, might be had at his warehouses. However various in quality, none of these ancient papers differed much in size, being all small—the very largest, taken from the heart of the cane, seldom exceeding thirteen fingers in breadth; the Hieratic, which comes next, being only eleven, the Fannian ten, the Amphitheatric nine, and the shop-paper not above six. And now, which of these was used for the Apician papillotes? Can we doubt which? The best, to be sure; that 'fine, compact, white, and smooth' kind, so complacently dwelt upon by Pliny; such as a poor poet might wistfully eye in vain; while large stores of it were con-

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* It was indeed the best of all papers for cooking. 'Its porous nature,' says Dr. Lister, 'must have been admirably adapted for soaking itself in grease, thereby preserving the fish from burning, and yet allowing some of the fat to escape.'

fided to the Udes and Soyers of the Augustan age without stint or admonition, 'peritura parcere chartæ!'

If we glance from these savoury Apician sardines swimming in their paper envelopes in fine Venafrian oil, to the cooking utensils around, a noble *batterie de cuisine*, shining in metallic splendour, presents itself to view,—silver stewpans, covercled and without lids; a range of massive saucepans of the same metal, beautifully chased; silver shapes in endless variety; silver egg-poachers in abundance; and, as if even silver itself were too plebeian for the favourite food of these extravagant men, golden fish-dishes (chrysendeta), inlaid with precious stones, are there; with golden drinking goblets, the charge of some trusty slave, to be well watched when presented to poor friends and needy clients: while the plate-range is filled with an immense assortment of all kinds of red Arretian earthenware; enough for every possible culinary requirement or emergency. Sometimes however, in spite of all these magnificent preparations, the first kitchens might be taken by surprise: Domitian's for instance, on a notable occasion,

possess'd no casserole
In which to dress the noble turbot whole.

But this circumstance proves nothing, for who knows what that turbot's dimensions were? A rhombus may be as big as a whale. Rondolet saw one of true cetacean proportions, being five cubits long, eleven broad, and one thick; and the recent annals of fishing on our own coasts register a turbot taken off Whitby, weighing thirteen stone eight pounds, and measuring six feet across. *That* was not cooked whole, we presume; while Domitian's—whatever its size may have been—remained unmutilated, and was served 'integer et cadavere toto.'

CHAPTER V.

FISH SAUCES.

THE classic world, besides being eminently piscivorous, as we have seen, was as much addicted to fish sauces as ourselves, and a Roman and Grecian gentleman could no more have got through his *cœna* or *deipnon* without frequent recourse to the garum and alec bottle, than we without our cruets of Harvey and Burgess. As both these celebrated Latin sauces were manufactured from fish, we shall, before proceeding further, say a few words about them, together with that universal condiment which entered so largely into their composition—salt.

The ancients were very particular as to what kinds of salt they put into their saltcellars, exhibiting as many different kinds as we do of sugars. Sicily was particularly rich in its supplies, producing three or four very remarkable species, which differed not less in saline properties than in colour and general appearance. The Centuripine salt from this island was, according to Pliny, purple; that of Memphis, in Egypt, deep red; that excavated from the banks of the river Oxus, in Bactriana, tawny, inclining to a russet hue; whilst that in Cappadocia was of a yellow saffron-colour, quite transparent, and of a most agreeable odour; about Gela, in Sicily, the salt was so bright and clear that objects were reflected in it as in a mirror. The Tragasœan salt would neither spit, crackle, leap, nor sparkle in the fire, whilst

that from Agrigentum bore the heat of the fire without crepitating, but crackled and spit when put into water. Each of these salts was employed for some particular purpose, and seldom put to any other. The Tarentine was used medicinally for the cure of bipeds, but the Tragasœan, only as a collyrium for the eyes of horses and bopic patients; the moist salt of Attica was appropriated entirely to the table, but the dry salt of Megara was employed to preserve meat. Besides all these natural salts, there was a highly-aromatized and savoury kind eaten, either as a condiment at table, or as a whet to the appetite, and out of this, says Pliny, Garum was made, and owed to it a great share of its celebrity. He speaks also of another salt procured by evaporation from the brine in which maenides had previously been steeped, as very much to be commended; and after giving his readers a good deal of curious miscellaneous information respecting salt, not to be found elsewhere, and showing that it is conducive to the health and comfort of all the animal kingdom, he breaks out rhapsodically in its praise, as Dr. Johnson, in a playful imitation of Harvey, has since done, and sums up its eulogy by declaring that life itself could not be carried on without it, and that so persuaded are all mankind of its value and importance, that to express whatever is most delightful in their daily intercourse, the *sallies* of wit, the gems of wisdom and of oratory, a variety of pleasing accomplishments, the sparkle of a cheerful countenance, and the repose of a mind quite at ease, the common word coined for all such blessings is *sales*, or salts. Those public awards of merit, called salaries, which States make to deserving citizens, are derived from the same source. Nor is it more necessary to man's enjoyment and comfort than to his acceptance with the Gods, for what sacrifice would ever avail, he asks, that was not first seasoned and inaugurated with a cake of

salted meal?* How highly the old Romans thought of it may, he observes, be inferred from their having given the names Porta Salara and Via Salara,—Salters-gate and Salters-way,—to one of the main outlets of the city, by which all the redundant supplies brought up the Tiber† from Ostia were carried into the Sabine country.

Though the ancients had not the glory of decomposing salt, they supposed however that it was a compound body made up of different elements, in such close affinity, as not to be dissociable by human means, for which reason they selected it as a fit emblem of the indissolubility of friendship. Homer calls it sacred and divine; and whoever ate it with another was supposed to become his henceforth inseparable ally. Hospitality and salt are wordscontinually used to express the same idea, *πού ἅλες; πού τράπεζαι;* 'where's the salt, where the rites of hospitality;' 'setting which at nought, he has become the author of these mischiefs,' says Demosthenes; and to

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* Pliny. This reminds us of those sacred words, 'Every sacrifice is salted with salt,' as if the practice was universal, and salt considered as an element essential to its right performance.

† The salt of Rome is at present monopolized by one or two rapacious *salinators*, who farm it from Government, and alone fatten, while all the poor of the Papal States are pining for a supply in vain; the article is so dear, that many go entirely without it, while the fiscal waters of the great sea are keenly protected by a vigilant coast-guard, who form a cordon, and pace the shore anxiously, as if on the look-out for an invasion. Amongst the novelties which struck us with most surprise on returning to England, after a lengthened sojourn in this land of monopoly and misrule, was the prodigality with which our own poor everywhere use salt. When for the first time we beheld our gardener actually dressing the asparagus-beds till they were white under the deposit, we thought of how many hundred hands there were at Naples which would have rejoiced to pick up a very little of the large quantity that seasoned our ground, to season their unsalted bread and insipid minestras.

transgress *the laws of hospitality* or of *salt* were equivalent phrases. But as chemical affinities are sometimes stronger than moral obligations, it would occasionally happen, even after such friendly entertainment, that a perjured guest violated, like Paris, the implied obligation, when he might expect a just and heavy retribution from the Gods.

Garum was originally made from a fish called by the Greeks *garon*, but only known at Rome, in Pliny's day, as a sauce; that manufactured from the mackerel of New Carthage, and further named 'garum sociorum' (allies' sauce), in supposed compliment to the Spaniards, then in alliance with Rome, was reckoned the best. Strabo bears similar testimony to the merits of the Carthagena sauce; but as very good *eau de Cologne* is made in Paris, though not quite equal to the original, so the article in question was at first imitated at Pompeii, out of Campanian scombers, and other sea-fish; till, as the demand increased, many new places entered the lists, and a great variety of fishy compounds came to be offered to the Latin public, each bearing on the bottle a label with the old name, and pretending to be concocted from the original receipt. These imitations were, as we learn, of very unequal merits: sometimes the liquor ran thick and turbid, as the epithet *faecosum* sufficiently indicates; in general however, though varying greatly in taste, quality, consistence, and colour, they were for the most part defecated and clear. One species, in particular, was so bright and transparent, as to resemble in appearance, as in flavour, 'honeyed wine.'* Besides

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* This gives a strange notion of the sweet wines of antiquity, when a salted essence of fish could be converted into anything resembling them in flavour; the ancient wines however were not unfrequently seasoned with sea-water: Pliny mentions no less than seven so doctored; the most famous among them was one

the far-famed scomber, and the black and red garums, in general use, a garum piperatum* is mentioned by Petronius Arbiter, and a very costly elixir called *aimateon*, or blood sauce, because it was formed of the gore and entrails of the thunny, crammed into a vessel hermetically closed and drawn off when decomposition was complete; another kind, made of lupus, mænades, smarades, and other scaly fish, was used, says Pliny, by certain superstitious votaries to keep themselves chaste; and he adds that the Jews, who may not eat fish but with fins and scales, employed this kind in their religious rites and ceremonies. Garum was everywhere held in the highest esteem; and notwithstanding the number of different fish used in the preparation, the demands were so constant, that dealers sought to increase the quantity, and heighten the flavour, by mixing with it a variety of other fluid ingredients—as oil, wine, vinegar, or water; whence it took the several names of *elaiogarum*, *oinogarum*, *oxygarum*, *hydrogarum*, and each of these particular crases had its admirers, who used it not only as a fish-sauce at table, but as a liqueur that might be indulged in at all hours of the day;† rich men

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called *leucrocorum*, originally invented by a Greek sailor, who having 'tapped the admiral,'—that is, bored through the cask, and abstracted a portion of the contents, replaced the deficiency by an equal quantity of sea-water, producing a compound so highly approved of, that the people of Cos, Lesbos, and Rhodes, taking the hint, mixed a large quantity of brine with all their vintages, and made a species of marine wine much esteemed by connoisseurs.

* Pepper was by no means a common ingredient in the cookery of the ancients, being, as Plutarch says, 'spurned and disliked;' so that men were debarred the free use of lemon-juice, of which it would have been the corrective.

† A pint per diem was the camp allowance of the pro-Emperor Aurelian, when a private in the service of Valerian; this suggests the propriety of the second reading of 'garum asotorum,' or sots' sauce, in place of the common one, garum sotiorum, or allies'

devoured it greedily, and every Roman* lady, mouth-agape, might say, with the Lucrine oyster, 'nobile nunc sitio luxuriosa garum.' As the price was very exorbitant—Pliny says, 500 sesterces a gallon—those who made presents of a flask, generally took care, like Martial, to allude to its value:

> Of scomber's precious blood I send
> A *garum'd* bottle to my friend;
> Costly and thick, the last that dript
> From bleeding gills and entrails ript.

In Greece, the taste for garum was quite as predominant as at Rome: those stately tragedians Æschylus and Sophocles do not fear to lower the dignity of their muse by mentioning anchovy sauce; Aristophanes tells us, in a passage preserved by Athenæus,

> That all the topers, to prepare 'em
> Drank every man his glass of garum;

and another, in the same savoury pages, says,

> With garum our cruets run over,

which (however it might have damaged the damask at table) does not present the unpleasant image he elsewhere brings before us, when

> Adown a gourmet's grisly beard,
> It ran, and all his throat besmear'd,

like the ointment on that of the patriarch.

Alec, like garum, was at once the name of a fish and

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sauce. As Vopiscus, in his life of Aurelian, uses the word *liquamen* in place of *garum*, which, till the time of Elagabalus, was universal; and as Apicius uses the same word with Vopiscus, Dr. Lister's argument that the author of the Ars Coquinaria could not have flourished under Hadrian, but considerably later, seems to be well founded.

* Dic quotus et quanti cupias cœnare, nec unum
Addideris verbum; cœna parata tibi est.
Cum te sex cyathis orat amica gari.

of a sauce made from it: both Horace and Strabo use the word in the first sense, Columella in the second. This sauce differed from garum only in being thicker; it was formed of the dregs and feculence which remained after the garum liquor had been decanted off clear: this was at first made from the deliquescing bodies of a little fish called alecula, but many other small species were at length pressed into the service. The thick turbid brine, undissolved salt, and sodden bodies of the fish, constituted the semi-solid compound yclept putrilago, from which, cleared of scales, bones, and other impurities, alec was immediately derived. That the fish called halecula, of which the alec was originally made, was the anchovy, seems probable from what is elsewhere recorded of it: the halecula was a small, very common fish, worthless in itself, but affording an excellent sauce, dissolving more readily in brine than any other, in all which respects it accords perfectly with the anchovy; moreover Pliny, speaking of the various scaly fish used in preparing this sauce, mentions that the particular species called by the Greeks aphues, and by the Latins apua, or lupus, was in much request for this purpose. Now one of the small fish included by Aristotle under the above general title of *ἀφύη* he elsewhere calls *ἐγγραυλὶς*, and as this *ἐγγραυλὶς* is generally supposed to mean the anchovy: there seems ground for inferring, first, that the words *lupus*, *apua*, and *engraulis*, are all different synonyms for *halecula*, and, secondly, so many different designations for the anchovy; but the strongest presumption in favour of the identity of halecula and the anchovy, is afforded by the modern Italian name of this little clupea—*alici*, which is obviously nothing but a melting down of alecula into soft bastard Latin; and finally, if alec be not this species, which of the two hundred and seventy names given by Pliny, of those that inhabit the Mediterranean, will represent it?

As articles of this description, when approved of, always lead to spurious imitations, we are not surprised to read of certain unscrupulous persons who manufactured alec out of crabs, oysters, shrimps, sea-urchins, and a variety of improper substitutes, in place of the proper ingredients, to the detriment of the genuine sauce; and we may readily suppose, in a place so famous for its mural advertisements as Pompeii, that visitors would not be left in the dark where to procure the right sort, but that many a friendly index-finger pointed it out on the wall, whilst as many caveats against unprincipled vendors of shell-fish counterfeits would be sedulously stuck up during the bathing season, with suitable warnings; and as there was an inferior *black* article palmed off in commerce under the name, a special warning would be directed against this:

Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto.*

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* Garum was still, in Belon's day, manufactured by the Greeks at Constantinople. Other attempts too have been occasionally made to revive these ancient sauces in modern times. Rondolet, in particular, was the inventor of one bearing, he says, comparison with the best of those gone by. His plan in preparing it was to macerate anchovies in oil and vinegar, well spiced and seasoned with chopped parsley, over a very slow fire, till the whole was dissolved, and so highly did he approve of this mixture as to speak and even write of it with enthusiasm. 'My oxygarum,' says he, 'unlike those putrescent gravies which hide themselves from reprobation under the proverbial exemption *putri salsamentum amat origanum*, is a sauce at once wholesome and savoury, and fit to set before a king.' Garum, though no longer manufactured in Italy, seems to have continued to be so even after the Latin language had melted down into the modern Italian; evidence of this occurs in an analysis of the modern word for a dealer in salt provisions—*pescigarolo*, corrupted into *pizzicarolo*. Decompose it, and you have *pesci*, fish; *garo*, garum; and *lo*, the occupation or trade,—the whole word, *dealer in fish garum*; though any such dealer would certainly stare were you to ask for the article still designated in the title of his calling.

All the relishes of the ancients were liquid sauces; of solid zests, like botargue and caviare, they knew nothing: and the reader being probably much in the same predicament, we proceed to enlighten him, and to show how they are made. The first and more delicate of the two, called *botargue* in Italy, but *ootarichos* in Greece, is derived, with its half-modern, half-ancient nomenclature, from that country. A comparatively recent invention, it is procured by salting within their membranes the roes of several species of fish, particularly those of the basse and the grey mullet, leaving them to imbibe the brine for twenty-four hours, and afterwards applying, as in the process for baking Norfolk biffins, a steady graduated pressure. When all the superfluous moisture is thus got rid of, they are high-dried in the chimney, and stowed away in bins full of bran. The above delicacy fetches a good price; hard drinkers are in the habit of using it to spur a jaded appetite, to excite thirst, and to improve the flavour of the wines. Caviare is a similar preparation, of uncertain but not very ancient date, devised by the people of the North for like purposes, and manufactured chiefly out of the roe of huso sturgeon. The process is thus described by Platina:—'Wash and clean, salt and dry the roe, then again moisten it in a mixture of wine and vinegar, and when soft enough to admit of easy manipulation, break it up carefully with the hand, and pressing out all redundant moisture, dry it finally in the open air, when it will be fit for use.' The best way to serve it is to hold a small piece before the fire for a few seconds, melting it upon toast. If too salt for use, a little washing in tepid water will not impair the flavour, and it may be served up thus prepared with a forced meat of pot-herbs, onions, and peppercorns. The extent to which both botargue and caviare have been patronized abroad, though scarcely known but by name in England, is very great:

countries north and south have alike acknowledged their merits, and popes and czars swell the long list of their patrons.

As no bottle of alec or garum has hitherto turned up in the excavations of Pompeii, we cannot speak authoritatively, nor institute a comparison between these productions of the Burgesses of antiquity with our own. Fish however we can compare, and the result goes to prove that any cockney with two shillings and sixpence in his pocket, may regale over the stairs of Hungerford Market, at Blackwall or Richmond, on delicacies which the senate and people of Rome were utter strangers. Indeed, it is no inconsiderable set-off against the disadvantages of living so far from the sun, that the supplies of northern fish-markets are incontestably and greatly superior to those of any Italian or Sicilian pescheria: superior, 1st, because in those kinds which are common to our great ocean, and their 'great sea,' our own are better flavoured; because, 2ndly, even the finer sorts, which belong exclusively to the Mediterranean, are for the most part poor; and 3rdly, and above all, because there is an almost total want in its waters of species which we consider, and advisedly, as our best. Were superiority to be determined by mere beauty and variety of colouring, the market of Billingsgate could not enter into competition for a moment with the smallest fishing-town in the south, where the fish are for the most part coasters, and derive their gorgeous hues from the same buccina and coquillage, whence the Tyrians got their superb dyes. But as the gayest plumage is by no means indicative of the bird best adapted for the table; so brilliancy of scales affords no criterion by which to judge of the culinary excellence of fish, the beauty of whose skin in this instance contrasts singularly with the qualities of the flesh, which is generally poor and insipid, and sometimes unwholesome and even delete-

rious. The Mediterranean pelagians (or open sea-fish) have neither brilliancy of colour, nor delicacy of flesh to atone for the want of it; so that no Englishman will repine to leave thunny beef to the Sicilian ichthyophagist, whilst he has the genuine pasture-fed article at home in place of it. Nor though, to such coarse feeders as the ancient Greeks, sword-fish might be held equal to veal, will his better instructed palate assent to such a libel upon wholesome butchers' meat. Mullet must indeed be admitted on all hands to be a good fish; but one good thing only in a hundred does not satisfy omnivorous man, and *toujours triglia* is not better than *toujours perdrix*, as every one who has passed a winter at Naples knows to his cost. Sardines are only palatable in oil, *au naturel* they are exceedingly poor and dry; and for that other small clupean, the anchovy (the latent virtues of which are only elicited by the process which metamorphoses the fish into sauce), British white-bait is far more than an equivalent. But if the Mediterranean has but few alumni to be proud of, the poverty of its waters is certainly more conspicuous in its deficiencies than in its supplies; indeed, the instinct of all first-rate fish seems to be, to turn their tail upon this sea. Thus among the salmonidæ, salmon and smelt are alike unknown; of the gadian family, all the finest species, as cod, haddock, whiting, ling, and coal-fish, are wanting; and to quote but one other example,

> Whilst migrant herrings steer their myriad bands,
> From seas of ice to visit warmer strands,

as we read in the Apocrypha of Dr. Darwin, not one ever entered the Bay of Naples, unless salted in a barrel from England.

CHAPTER VI.

FISH IN MEDICINE.

THOUGH fish has from the earliest ages been the world's favourite food, it has also been frequently decried as a poor unsatisfying diet. One Greek writer advanced the startling position that an over-addiction to it impairs vision, and another, that eating fish at all makes men foolish and effeminate,* to which notion Homer is supposed to subscribe, in not allowing any of his heroes to partake of these luxuries in camp. In more modern days again it has been averred, that an over-indulgence in this friandise entailed upon the Jews of old their foul scourge of leprosy;† 'that the cold fleme of a fish diet was in some way a sovran and sure recipe for slaying the flesh,' (whence, no doubt, its early introduction as an instrument of religious discipline into the Christian church;) that 'thin drink does so overcool the blood, and making many fish meals,' that those who are ichthyophagously disposed 'fall into a kind of male green sickness, and when they marry get wenches;'‡ and again to the same purpose by another as doughty authority in his way, 'that there is a curious circumstance observed to happen to the animate part of the creation which draw their nutriment from fish, as birds and the human race, that they produce more females, while doing so, than males.'§ Viewed as a diet for the sick, some doctors, like Fracastorius, prohibit them to their patients alto-

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* Διὰ γὰρ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἰχθίων πάντες βλακώδεις εἰσι καὶ μεστοὶ λάπης.

† Vide Le Clerc, Mason Good, etc.

‡ Shakspeare.

§ Soyer.

gether; others, like the Greek physicians, Philotimus, Mnesitheus, and Diphilus, while they speak disparagingly of some species as unwholesome, recommend others for food, as will sufficiently appear by the citation of one or two sentences from their different treatises on dietetics. 'Those fish which live both in salt and fresh water are generally heavy and indigestible;* of river fish, those called pyruntes (trout?), which swim only in the coldest and most rapid streams, excel all others in digestibility.† Diphilus, in his treatise 'on what to set before the sick and sound,'‡ says, 'saxatile kinds will not keep, and though they yield wholesome chyle, being *εὔχυλοι*, are not very nutritious, *ὀλιγότροφοί εἰσι*. The pelagians, or deep swimmers, on the other hand, keep longer and are highly nutritious, though somewhat hard of digestion, and *δυσοικονόμητοι*, trying to the economy. Of some species the flesh excites, of others, impedes the peristaltic action of the intestines. The 'flats' generally sit easy on the stomach, *εὔογκοί εἰσιν*, yield much nutriment, are not flatulent, and leave little excrementitious matter behind them;§ cartilaginous fish again are carnose in fibre and difficult to digest; the same may be said of scombers, which, being very rich, should be grilled over a slow fire to allow the grease to drip away. Of parts, the head is in prime fish the best, and in some, as the narke, the only portion fit for food, *κ. τ. λ.* Whilst there were differences of opinion among the ancients in regard to the digestibility of a fish diet, there was perfect unanimity as to the advantages to be derived from fish in physic; and they were accordingly prescribed in every form, fresh, salt, raw, cooked, and calcined; and every part and tissue, flesh, bones, skin, trail, brain, gills, viscera,

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* *Δυσπέπτοι καὶ βαρύτατοι.*

† *Διαφέρουσι τῶν ποταμίων ἰχθύων ἄλλων εὐπεψίᾳ.*

‡ *Περὶ τῶν προσφερόμενων τοῖς νοσοῦσι καὶ τοῖς ὑγιαίνουσι.*

§ *Οὐκ ἐγκαταλείπει περιττώματα.*

and teeth; each of which was supposed to act as a specific against some human infirmity or disease. To mention but a very few of these endless panaceas, the triglia being Diana's own fish, was reputed so powerful an antaphrodisiac, that it was only necessary to dine often upon this species to become a worthy votary of the goddess of chastity.* The numb-fish (*narke*) applied alive over the temples in headache is mentioned by Galen as a specific for that complaint. He used it, homœopathically no doubt (for it produces numbness), in paralysis. A sole placed over the region of the spleen was supposed to act beneficially in splenitis. Pliny cites authorities to prove that the remora (stay-fish) was used with great efficacy in putting off an accouchement, and generally in checking any of the natural actions of the body under undue excitement.† It was a medical *on dit*, that a shark's tooth rubbed across an infant's gums, greatly accelerated the process of dentition, securing to him not only sound incisors, but a shark-like appetite to cater for it. The bile of the scorpena figures away in prescriptions signed by no less venerable hands than those of Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, and Pliny. Fish-livers enjoyed considerable reputation, both as topical applications in local diseases, and in the treatment of fever and dropsy. The liver of the mustela was in such vogue that the *campones* of those days cut it out, and then restored the quondam possessor alive to his pond, where he continued to grow notwithstanding the mutilation. This relation sounds, like that of Bruce's Abys-

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* Dr. Pisanelli, of Bologna, speaks of having given this fish with *equal* success in diarrhœa and hydrophobia.

† It was also said to suspend judgment in lawsuits as effectually as if they had got into chancery; on which account 'plaintiffs seldom ventured into the fish-market, the mere sight of it being at such a juncture held as inauspicious.'

simian beefsteaks, highly apocryphal, but is no doubt veracious, and finds its parallel in the modern mode of castrating carp in order to fatten them for the table. To mention but one more instance of fish pharmacy, the livers of muræna and pastinacas were found effectual antidotes against the wounds of these fish, whether inflicted by their spines or teeth: awkward wounds they were; for though it may be a fable that Circe procured her store of subtle poisons from this source, the personal experience of Willughby, who was bitten by a muræna, and reports on the severity of the bite, is no invention. Gillius says of the weapon of the pastinaca skate, that it is the very 'pest of the sea;' to which Pliny adds, that it acts with all the force of iron and the deadliness of the most malignant poison, not only against animals, but even against trees, which, when wounded by it, die outright, and almost immediately. Potent then indeed was the wound, but a homœopathic remedy, more potent still, was at hand. *Similia similibus curantur*, says Hahnemann, and lo! a proof. 'A rustic, wounded by one of these pastinaca, which he was endeavouring to secrete under his dress, presented himself to Rondolet with the weapon still sticking in his flesh,' and as no good surgeon will maunder over sores he is to salve and dress,

Οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ
θρηνεῖν ἐπῳδὰς ἐπὶ τομῶντι πήματι,

the professor having removed it as carefully as he could, burnt some of the liver of the fish, and then applied the powder to the wound; this procuring immediate ease, and 'convincing him that the pastinaca contained within its body both poison and antidote' (when in fact it contains neither), 'he immersed the weapon in vinegar, smeared it with hepatic fish-paste, and replaced it over the lacerated part.' The cure was sudden and complete:

The closing flesh that instant ceased to glow,
The wound to rankle, and the blood to flow.

Pliny had said many centuries ago the very same thing of the sanatory virtues of the liver against the mischiefs caused by the tail of the ray; affording the clearest evidence that homœopathy is no new, but, quantum valeat, an old effete Latin inanity; just as again the heroic treatment of epidemic fever by wine called Brunonian, after Dr. Brown, is taught incidentally by Sophocles, and should be called Sophoclean.* But not only was the liver of this skate thus early employed in *substance*, the oil obtained from it was also much in vogue in various hepatic affections: Pliny speaks too of another oil extracted from the dolphin's liver, and administered between the paroxysms of ague, as a potent antidote; and he adds, that the same mixed with wine (there are *ricorsi*† even in the formularies of prescribing, for cod-liver oil is still administered in wine) was an excellent remedy in dropsy. Thus, though the Romans did not use the identical oil we do, nor prescribe it for the same diseases, they used one which was probably found just as efficacious.‡ In confirmation of which it may be mentioned that Dr. Bardsley's first experiments were

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* An epidemic fever is raging at Thebes, and Bacchus is invited by the Chorus to come and cure it:

Καὶ νῦν, ὡς βιαίας
ἔχεται πάνδημος ἀμὰ πόλις ἐπὶ νόσου
μολεῖν καθαρσίῳ ποδὶ Παρνησί. ν
ὑπερ κλιτύν.

† Even the mode of obtaining the oil in question, viz. 'by heating and softening the viscus in earthenware vessels over a slow fire, and skimming it off as it rose to the surface,' is, we believe, that at present had recourse to with the like view in Scotland.

‡ Besides proving a most valuable ally to the physician in dyspeptic, rheumatic, and some other ailments, in which itspowers are

made with a very impure mixed oil; and that now several other fish, as well as the cod, are amerced of their livers, this practice indeed obtaining in every case where the quantity yielded is likely to prove sufficient to defray the expense of extraction.

Fish roes were unknown to the ancients either as a drug or poison, though that of the barbel from the time of Gesner has formed the subject of medical investigation, and was not very long ago enrolled among the emetics of several pharmacopœias, till wisely abandoned on account of its dangerous properties. Abroad, instances are not wanting of fatal results from its employment; and Antonio Gazius, who experimented upon his own person with two small boluses, has left the following remarks as a caveat to all future experimentalists: 'At first I felt no inconvenience, but some hours having elapsed, I began to be disagreeably affected, and as my belly swelled, and could not be brought down by anise or other carminatives, I was soon in a state of great depression and distress. An hour afterwards my countenance, as I have since heard, changed, and was pallid like that of a man in a swoon, and all the symptoms becoming rapidly more and more urgent, my friends were in the deepest anxiety. At length a deadly coldness creeping over my trunk and limbs, a violent attack of cholera ensued, from which, after vomiting, and passing the offending bits of roe, I ultimately recovered, though long labouring under such prostration of strength, that my life was for some time judged in imminent peril. The

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less precisely ascertained, it has been found invaluable in diseases of the chest, and may be said to have achieved what no other medicine ever yet achieved, the controlling of hectic symptoms, the suspension of tubercular deposits, the arrest of further disorganization, and even the cicatrization of existing cavities in the substance of the lung.

roe of the pike is said by some authors to have produced symptoms almost as untoward.'

The cultivation of the hair has always been regarded as an important concern, both in ancient and modern times. To make it grow, to prevent its falling off, or to change its colour by art when nature has not been propitious, are and have been the endeavours of mankind from the earliest periods to the present. For the first of these purposes the means anciently adopted were as various and about as efficacious as the cantharides, the quinine, the Macassar oil, and the twenty other equally vaunted nostrums to which it is to be regretted that some respectable names are still occasionally attached as vouchers; but having no faith in them ourself, we will not obtrude them upon the reader. Next, in regard to colouring the hair:

If any man is disposed to colour his hair black (says Pliny), let him make an ointment of calcined sea-urchins and lard, and apply this to the part that he wishes to become black, he will find it presently succeed to his wishes; as infallible also is a liniment composed of horse-leeches boiled in vinegar, used frequently as a fomentation.

We suspect the Roman practice here to have been greatly in arrear of modern improvements. The French, as all the world knows, have a variety of colouring fluids, but even they seem to be outdone by the Sikhs, whose chiefs dye their hair, beards, and whiskers of various hues,—white, black, red, and particoloured, according to the fancy of the wearer, which is more than was ever attempted either by Frenchman or Roman. One extraordinary object with them was to thwart nature, and, contrary to the common usage of encouraging the hair to grow, to prevent its growth:

For this purpose (says the Latin Buffon) the blood, liver, or bile of the thunny, are to be sedulously rubbed on the scalp; a device first hit upon by the famous midwife Salpe, who, by rendering boys beardless, enhanced their value for sale.

But as Pliny appends to his recipe,—

This one point should be previously observed, that the hair be first rooted out from any place you wish to make bald,

it demands no great stretch of credulity to believe in the subsequent efficacy of these drugs.

Whilst the conduct of the ancient drama was entrusted to very few actors, each having a clearly assigned part to sustain, drugs, or the *dramatis personæ* to counteract disease, formed, in the hands of the ancient physician, an ill-assorted set, either not combining in action or uncertain in operation, or else, like French *tisanes*, wholly inert. Complex prescriptions however, in remote times, are just what might be expected; for medicine being a science founded upon observation alone, must needs at first have been empiric, the most adventurous practitioner being then the best physician. To know what really exercised control, and what control, on the vital actions of the body in health and disease, required experiments without end, and everything that could be swallowed became accordingly the subject of experiment. But as knowledge from such sources must be exceedingly slow, and induction in so purely practical a matter of little avail, a thousand such experiments would frequently be made before any certain conclusion was arrived at. With the recorded experience of twenty centuries, the world at last has been enabled to purge its overloaded pharmacopœias of many nullities and absurdities, and of some unsafe preparations once in vogue; and every new edition, by diminishing bulk, adds to their respectability and authority as codes of practice. It has been discovered that some of the supposed strings to Apollo's bow are bowstrings to the patient, and that the old proposed inscription for a pharmacy, 'Hic venditur galbanum, elaterium, opium, et omne quod in *um* desinit nisi remedium,' was from their abuse as true as severe. Hippocrates blames the physicians before *him* for the fewness of their drugs,

ὅτι καὶ ὀλιγοῖσι τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῖσιν ἀκέεσιν ἐχρέωντο· but he lived in an early age of the iatric art; had his life been prolonged, to test all he recommends, there can be no doubt he would have been an earnest advocate for short pharmacoperias and have rejoiced accordingly in ours. But though our pharmacopœia has been set to rights, there is one thing which has not yet undergone so thorough a reform as the friends of medicine could wish; we mean, simplicity in prescribing,—the unmixing of many complex long-established mixtures, boluses, and pills, with a view to assign to every medicine its particular duty. Too many rattling rural practitioners still flourish down recipes which look in their irregular length and wildness like the strophe of a Pindaric ode; but how is it possible to know the real value of drugs whilst there exists such a *mésalliance* of tonics, alteratives, and astringents?—one for this symptom, one for that, another for a third. Give us ever short rational prescriptions, in which every drug, like the words in a well-weighed epigram, or a close piece of reasoning, helps the other, and all combine to a result. Thought cuts everything down to its proper dimensions. Such self-interrogatories as—might not this be spared?—do I know anything of the action of that?—by mixing several unknown things, am I likely to produce a *callida junctura* that will be of advantage, or, contrariwise, a mischief to the patient?—would much simplify all prescriptions; and though it may be pleaded that such combinations are occasionally made for the sake of giving elegance to the prescribing art, the sick man for whom they are intended neither cares for, nor pays his fee for that; but values them only, as the medical practitioner ought, in proportion to their utility.

CHAPTER VII.

NAPLES BAY AND FISH-MARKET.

Κισσήρεις ὄχθαι χλωρά τ' ακτὰ
πολυστάφυλος.—*Soph.*

Parthenope. . . . . .
Cui Regina suo fecit de nomine nomen,
An virides memorem scopulos, piscosaque saxa,
Et tot muscosis excisa in rupibus antra?
Anne sinus tantos? te Polli, teque beato
Cum portu Misene tuo, et te molle Dicarchum?
Et Prochyten pomis vernantem, et pinguibus uvis?
Piscosas illinc Capreas, Fanumque, Minervæ,
Et Vici colles, et pampineum Surrentum?

GIANNETASIUS, *Halieutic*, lib. i.

IN discoursing, as our purpose is in the following pages, on the ancient fish of the Mediterranean, it may not be out of place, before proceeding to particulars, to give a slight introductory sketch of that most beautiful and prolific of natural Vivaria, the Bay of Naples, which not only abounds with living representatives of almost every species presently to be brought before the reader, but is moreover a site which, alike from its waters and its shores, awakes the liveliest reminiscences of the 'fishiana' of other days. On the Vesuvian side, many an elaborate mosaic and brilliant little fresco of painted fish adorn the walls and flooring of the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum, looking, after an eighteen hundred years' potting in a lava pie-crust, almost as fresh and ruddy as their readily recognized descendants in the Neapolitan peschcrias. The Pausilippo side of the harbour is yet more suggestive of old halieutic associations: thence

should some fisherman tourist, on a fine summer day waxing towards its close, embark to visit the 'cerulean grotto' of the opposite island, he will not fail as he approaches this sheltered part of the basin,

'Where Capri's rugged heights lie mirror'd deep
In those blue waters where her sea-fowl sleep,'

to observe, as he bends over the barque's side intently thymoscopizing the deep, the evolutions of myriads of fish—

'Who single or with mate
Graze the seaweed, their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray; or sporting with quick glance
Show to the sun their waved coats dropp'd with gold;
Or from their pearly shells come forth to seek
Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food
In jointed armour watch,'*

a legion of gliding shapes traversing the translucent waters here, there, and everywhere:

Πολλὰ δ' ἄναντα, κάταντα, πάραντάτε, δόχμιά τ' ἦλθον.

Some buoyant and iridescent as soap-bubbles floating up directly below the boat; others emerging at every angle of the abyss to swim round the motionless keel, and frisk under the drippings of the suspended oars; the lovely labridæ, to whose delicate, many-coloured cuticle, transparent scales, while they burnish and set it off, add their own hues; and conspicuous amongst these the lulis, mencha di re, or rainbow wrasse, in his gay harlequin dress of green and blue; the protean orbis, which from a flat suddenly changes to a sphere; the pink riband-fish cipolla, winding in wavy course like a streamer floating in the breeze; the fleet, broad-striped atalonga; the small mackerel colias, dashing into a scudding fry of anchovies or sardines, and disturbing mo-

* Milton.

mentarily the oily mappings of the tranquil sea; mugils in a noisy troop splashing up the waters like sportive bathers; the blue-finned gurnard bouncing away many feet into the air from his hungry pursuer the bonetus, and after tracing a momentary parabola of great brilliancy, dropping again with all his turquoises displayed into the element he had just quitted. These are but a scantling of the members of a tribe remarkable everywhere for variety of form and tinting; but which here present such an endless, ever charming, ever new series of kaleidoscopic combinations as after awhile to bewilder the brain of the beholder, and conjure up to him, as lost in pleasing reverie he continues gazing down into the deep, the dazzling glories of the Patriarch's vision.

In rowing across the Bay in the opposite direction of Puteoli and Baiæ, the line of traject lies necessarily and continually athwart tessellated pavements, marble moles, and colossal substructures in brick, whence stately villas, dedicated to good cheer, once rose high above the waves, but are now in possession of those very mullet for whose *edi*fication they were originally constructed; while oyster-crusted amphoræ and other broken potteries, receding under the keel, speak ever and anon a lively *memento mori* from out of their sandy sepulchre, telling of an earlier date, when, standing in goodly row in some great man's cellar, carefully sealed and labelled, they were filled, not as now, with ooze and cockle-shells, but with Venafrian oil, such as Virro's lampreys were wont to swim in, and choice Falernian, to pledge the illustrious giver of the tripatinum entertainment.

On landing at Baiæ, Piscator finds himself absolutely surrounded by objects of interest. Here, it is the *piscina mirabilis* that calls forth his admiration; there, that other brick edifice, the *cento camarelle*, makes equal calls on his attention; and though the object of this has hitherto puzzled antiquaries, he finds no difficulty, on consulting

the *genius loci*, in supposing it to have been a large marine boarding-house of many stories, adapted for the separate maintenance of different tribes of scaly lodgers. There, too, stands the temple of Jupiter Serapis, recording another tale of ancient shell-fish; those eroded columns now standing out of the sea, were perforated many centuries ago by industrious lithodomi, who effected their work at a time when Neptune took forcible possession of his brother's temple; and many a small-fry of anchovies and sardines frisking round the half-sunk altar, or scudding up the nave, show that they still consider it his property.* Besides all that these remains are apt to conjure up in the way of ancient association, there are many places without vestige which open an interesting field for conjecture; the precise whereabouts of Cicero's and Lucullus's villas,† of those vines where the afflicted Hortensius used to retire to mourn in privacy the death of his favourite lamprey, and the very spot where the dolphin would come, morning after morning, just half-an-hour before school-time, to carry his

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* This temple, after sinking with the subsidence of the coast, and remaining for many centuries up to the shoulders in water, was suddenly upheaved in 1543, and once more placed on—*terra firma*, we were going to say, but there is no *terra firma* at Naples; the ground has been slowly yielding for a long time. Many of the present inhabitants are old enough to have witnessed a considerable fall along the coast, and at some periods the centripetal action has been at the rate of a foot or more annually.

† Of the site of Lucullus's villa we know nothing positively; of that of Cicero, a good deal. Pliny, in whose time it was still extant, describes it as a delightful manor, situated over the sea, on the highway leading from the Lake Avernus to Puteoli; much renowned for the beauty of its grounds, and also for the stately galleries, porches, alleys, and walking places, which set off and beautified it. It was called Academia, because Cicero wrote his *Academics* within its walls; tepid springs were discovered in the vicinity after Cicero's death, which still continue in high repute

young favourite across the Bay to the Palæstrum at Puteoli, and back again at the regular hour, when the scholars were dismissed, are all sites which he will endeavour to make out. Nor on ground preoccupied by the most celebrated vivaria of antiquity, where orators, poets, men of fashion, and conscript fathers, vied with each other in the various arts of breeding, taming, and adorning their scaly broods, will he fail to consider attentively every rood as he walks over it, nor return to Naples till his mind is quite made up what dip represents the bed of the lakelet at Bauli, where, at the keeper's call, bedizened murænæ would shake their jewelled heads at the wondering crowds, and then retire to the depths again; where it was that Hirpinus, and after him other proprietors formed anastamosing ponds to keep separate their cockles, oysters, and winkles, according to the fastidious notions of the *gourmets* of their day; nor, finally, on re-embarking after this piscatory survey, will he forget that he is following, perhaps, the very track which Claudius's doughty high-admiral Optatus once ploughed on the parrot-fish protective service

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for the treatment of sore eyes; over these his freedman, Lauria Tullus, put up a Latin inscription, of which the following is a quaint translation, written 250 years ago:—

Oh, prince of Roman eloquence, lo! here thy grove, in place
How green it is! When planted first, it was to grow apace;
And Vetus, now who holds thy house, fair Academic hight,
Spares for no cost, but it maintains, and keeps in better plight.
Of late, also, fresh fountains here breake forth out of the ground,
Most holesome for to bath sore eyes, which earst were never found.
These helpful springs, the soile, no doubt, presenting to our view,
To *Cicero*, her auncient lord, hath done this honour due;
That since his books throughout the world are red by many a wight,
More waters still may cleare their eyes, and cure decaying sight.

as he swept the coast from Ostia to Naples, and scared with threatened impeachment and fine whomsoever he found poaching scari in the emperor's preserves.*

The Neapolitans continue to be just as fishily inclined as ever, and, oddly enough, still in obedience to the same great despot—Rome; the authority of whose culinary code under the emperors has been succeeded by a yet more domineering assumption of power on the part of her church:

> Veuve d'un peuple roi, mais reine encore du monde,

she has forgotten her widowhood, but not her queenly prerogatives. At a touch of her ecclesiastical wand, things change both their names and nature; a curule stool becomes an apostle's chair! the heads of bronze divinities assume the lineaments and bear the titles of calendared saints! heathen columns are metamorphosed into pillars of orthodoxy, and pagan temples expand into Christian edifices! The same infallible autocrat, ca-

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* It was the doctrine of some of the old jurisconsults at Rome that all fish, whether from pond or sea, was *res fisci*, and belonged to the reigning Cæsar:

> All that is fine in fish, where'er it swim,
> Is fiscal, and belongs of right to him,

as we read in Juvenal: and the same legal fiction strengthened by such precedent has come down to the Ferdinands, their successors. That part of the Bay enclosed between the shore where stands the king's fishing-box, and the Castel dell' Uovo opposite, is rigidly preserved for his Neapolitan Majesty's table. To this spot, innumerable pensioners on the royal bounty are attracted by an abundant provision of food, and having once entered the royal precincts, they are perfectly safe: while nets, spears, and harpoons are destroying thousands to the right hand and to the left, this is a complete sanctuary; no one dares hang a hook or try to inveigle a king's fish under penalty of three months' acquaintance with the inside of prison-bars.

nonizing a pagan practice, has declared that henceforth, under her sanction, the faithful may safely eat finny food as an act of penance, and fast upon viands which were held by their idolatrous progenitors as the height of luxury and self-indulgence.* It is well for the credit of a church issuing such unlimited orders upon the sea, that they have been hitherto punctually met: had she been called upon after the decree was gone forth to multiply deficient supplies, her reputation for thaumaturgy, great as it undoubtedly is, might have suffered, and the required support for the faithful have turned out lamentably inadequate. But this fruitful Bay, in spite of the greatly increased demands of a greatly increased population, continues, after the constant draggings and dredgings of eighteen centuries, as exhaustless as ever, being no sooner emptied of live-stock than it fills again. Before proceeding to explore its treasures *à fonds*, we will take a hasty view of the external beauties. For the enjoyment of these the visitor must row some way out to sea, and get beyond the reach of the thousand cloacal pipes which are continually pouring out the abominations of the city, and turning the inner part of the Bay into one vast cesspool. The waters here, always foul, look particularly so under a wet sky, when the scourings of the streets have added their contingent of dirt, and made the turbid mass yet more black in complexion. At such a time, flights of hungry sea-mews hover along the shore,

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* Severe as Rome is in her dealings with heretics in little matters of taste, she shows great tenderness to her children, permitting the heterodox stomachs of her orthodox sons to object to the prescribed diet, or even, Erasmus-like, to go to the length of declaring, without fear of excommunication, that their nostrils can discern no odour of sanctity, but, on the contrary, a very disagreeable odour, in all kinds of fish, whether they belong to the list which Galen considered wholesome, or to that which the Jewish code pronounced clean.

screaming their angry disappointment as the opaque waves, hiding their prey, roll on to envelope the Castle of St. Uovo in foam, or scaling the high walls of Chiatomoni, pour a deluge of all things base over the lava flags of the causeway. In summer, though the waters are less filthy in hue, they are, in consequence of the heat, more oppressively offensive than in winter; and the rank smells exhaled are frequently so overpowering, that the pedestrian who has been waiting till evening to indulge in a marine stroll, and to catch, as he had hoped, the breeze off the sea, is fain to change his route, and in spite of the beauty of the scene and the brightness of the sail-specked horizon, to retrace his steps over the heated pavement of the town in preference. If to walk along the shore be disagreeable, to bathe from it is still more so. The King not only asserts his prerogative over the fish of the bay, but he monopolizes its *clean* water also; autocrat of every drop of brine that flows between Naples and Syracuse, he is

Monarch of all he surveys,
His right there is none to dispute;
Folk and fishes submit to his sway,
And he claims e'en the sea, like Canute.

By his edict sea-water that has no scum upon it may not be carried on shore without an express order specifying accurately the number of gallons to be ceded to the applicant,* which may not be transgressed. A black line

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* We were first made acquainted with these restrictions when, intending to take a hot salt bath, our *barcarole* received orders to fill it: on plunging in, and finding the steaming stinking bilge-water more fetid than the fish-brine in which inland rheumatics were wont to lie and soak their skins in Pliny's day, the next step was to spring still faster out and hurry as soon as possible to the shore, to inquire whence the atrocious water had been brought. '*Eccola, Signore,*' said the unabashed boatman: growing somewhat irate at this cool announcement, a water-guard witness-

of demarcation points out accurately the distance to which, in this tideless sea, the city sewerage extends; that once passed, all nuisances are at an end; and by the time the boat has advanced through a host of brown-backed divers* rising thick round its course, and snorting like a company of seals, the complexion of the water has cleared; the Babel of city sounds is reduced by distance to a mere hum, scarcely audible amidst the flap-

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ing the scene, stepped up to interpose, and declared that Antonio had only done his duty; but since our 'Excellency was medical, and inclined for a bath, he should be permitted to carry six buckets from beyond the usual limits; but it is absolutely forbidden,' raising his voice to be heard by those around, 'for any one else to take water except just here.' 'Why?' asked we innocently. 'They would else knead their flour from the brine, and so cheat government of the salt-tax,' was the reply; for the farming of the salt being a source of revenue to the privy purse, the rights of monopolist contractors for the time being are most rigidly protected.

* The time passed under water by these lazzaroni is a curious calculation; *in* the water they remain probably more than half their natural lives; and of this again, half is spent *under* water with the fishes; three-quarters of a minute was, we found, the average time for a dive; they then come up, throw a handful of ooze into the floating basket, turn over, and go down again for the better part of a minute, and so on, for the day's work. Some of these men can remain two minutes out of sight, but the most daring among them, when we were at Naples in 1814, was a celebrated Sicilian diver employed by Ferdinand, who would plunge through twenty-five fathom, and bring him up tidings of long-lost treasures. Had Pope been at Naples, we must have suspected his description of the contention in the Dunciad, for the diver's prize, to have been transferred to paper from what he saw here; the lines—

> No crabs more active in the dirty dance,
> Downward to climb, and backward to advance, etc.,

most graphically depict the evolutions of these men-fish; indeed no men but lazzaroni could long endure to live in water so revolting.

ping of the canvas, and the tapping of the waves against the tarry sides of the boat; while ahead the sea is traversed in all directions by zebecs and feluccas,

> And every snow-white sail
> Has spread its breast to the summer sea,
> And swells to the freshening gale.

Thus, for the luxury of a clean dip, you must row out a mile from land, and then, towards the Ave Maria on some hot July day (only an Englishman, lazzarone, or dog ever thinks of it sooner), how refreshing it is to plunge from the side of the baked boat, head over heels, into the tepid waters of the Bay, none can know but those who have tried it. No fear of Pliny's Briarean Polypi, or the less apocryphal sharks, which, frequent as they are in some parts of the Mediterranean, do not intrude here. The water on a summer evening is warmer than the air by several degrees of Fahrenheit, but still refreshingly cool to the skin, there being a strange difference in the sensations produced by an atmosphere at seventy-five degrees, and immersion into water of the same temperature.*

At such a distance from shore the islands and mainland show off to equal advantage, and the eye in pleasing *dilemma* wanders from one *horn* of the Bay to the other, without knowing which to prefer. Here we follow the rugged outline of the headlands about Sorrento, Castellamare, and Vico; next pass over to Capri with its white townlet, Anacapri, perched on the brink of that awful precipice, only to be reached by the sloping acclivity of the inland side after half a day's toilsome ascent; then

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* Throughout the summer the average range about three feet below the surface, and within a mile from the shore, is seventy-five degrees, giving those cold-blooded animals the fish a medium considerably warmer to live in during this part of the year than that of the warm-blooded animals on shore.

the blue grotto and palace of Tiberius, and the lovely shores of Ischia, present themselves; and next, that sweet Procida, which the Latin poet so ingenuously prefers to the din and dirt of Suburra—'ego *vel* Prochytam præpono Suburræ'—as we Londoners agree to prefer Windsor and Richmond Park to Wapping, Whitechapel, or the Fleet. Once more leaving these islands for the mainland of the opposite horn, we gaze away for many a league towards Mola, on the road to Rome; then, after hovering a little over the Cape of Misenum, traverse back by the Baiæ and Puzzuoli coasts to Naples; and taking the whole sweep of the city, from Mergellina to Portici, complete the round of this panoramic fairy-land, by following the smoky column of the Nocera train in the direction of Benevento and the Caudine forks as far as the gates of Pompeii. The loveliness of this scenery is enhanced when the season and hour are well chosen (sunset is the hour, and autumn the season); the sky, as the sun is rapidly descending in the aerial light, gradually mellows, and changes hue, till his large disk, touching the waters, flashes over their surface, rosy twilight commences, and continues to deepen till the apotheosis of the God of Day is complete; then night, as at a signal given, instantly rushes over the deep—'ruit oceano nox'—night, but not darkness at Naples; for anon a moon begins to rise above the Sorrentine hills with an orb as large as the departed sun, looking more like some new luminary emerging from the interior of the mountain, than the small, dim planet of our colder sky—

> That pale-faced maiden,
> With *white fire* laden,
> Whom *northerns* call the moon.

Presently she clears the ridge, and sailing high in air, tracks a broad yellow road across the noiseless deep, dispersing a mild effulgence over cliff and island. Next,

fit satellites to such a moon, the stars appear—not faint, nor tarnished by fog, as with us, but like a fresh issue of the heavenly mint, all *fiori di cogno*, scintillating everywhere overhead, and winking through the all-eyed concave in apparent proximity to the earth; while one, the evening Koh-i-nor, glowing like a lesser moon, suspended just over the Vomero, 'declares' from the firmament 'the glory of God,' making an unspoken but not voiceless appeal to the sons of care,—

Up to the starry sky,
Where yon bright planets burn,
All ye who heave the sigh,
Turn ye, O pilgrims, turn.

The water, receiving this flood of glory upon its surface, presents one vast illuminated speculum from Baiæ to Sorrento, where the whole Eidoranion is accurately depicted; nor are these reflected legacies of the departed sun the only sources whence light emanates; besides all these lights of heaven, there are lights on land and lights at sea. First and foremost, standing out in shadowy vastness, like the Spirit of Evil, in Milton—Vesuvius emits deep red flashes from his lava hell; by day these operations are concealed in dense smoke, but now bursts of meteoric fires belched forth against the bright, pure sky, make the trembling stars turn pale in their courses. However, there are other and more cheerful lights on shore, such as Gerard della Notte loved to paint,—the brilliant revolving Pharos; the gas-lit Chiaia; the streets lamp-starred up to the very ridge of the Vomero, where bonfires crackle and burn; and at intervals the dark foliage of the Villa Reale is brightened with gerbes of rockets, ascending from its recesses, and breaking overhead in showers of turquoises, emeralds, and rubies; from the same dark ilex hedge fiery serpents meander out to sea, and, stopping suddenly short, plunge with a loud hiss under water.

Nor are the fireworks confined to the land: many a gay shallop, bedizened with coloured transparencies in honour of the Virgin or some patron saint, exhibits rival pyrotechnics; then, too, the fishing-sloops glide in and out of the creeks, following their noiseless occupation among the rocks, each burning at the stern a flaming torch, which ever and anon, as it waxes faint, is restored by a smart blow to its wonted splendour; when a spectre-like figure in a threatening attitude, with uplifted spear, is revealed standing at the bow; and as the light again grows dim, on goes the fairy boat in shadowy indistinctness, till another coruscation bursts from the struck flambeau and renews the scene. Nor must we omit the beautiful fire-balloons sent up from various points along the coast, and winging their way between sea and sky, as if carrying despatches to the stars. Finally, the waters too are luminous; innumerable hordes of molluses glitter like glow-worms in the depths of the abyss, whilst huge moon-fish lie on the surface, illuminating many a watery rood around.

Now, who but a Neapolitan would expect an abrupt quenching of all this brilliancy,—the disturbance of a repose of earth, air, and water, so absolute and complete,—

> When not a breath invades the deep serene,
> And not a cloud obscures the lovely scene?

Who could imagine that a mighty change in the elements might wind up the evening with a sudden borrasque? Yet this is the usual course of things here at the autumnal equinox. While the observer is, perhaps, enjoying the placid moonbeams, and reluctantly thinking of returning home, a whole park of artillery is preparing for mischief behind the rocks of Capri. A squall, as sudden as a Neapolitan's 'rabbia,' quickly ruffles the quiescent sea, and lashes it into foam; the earliest intimation of which is no sooner given, than all hasten to

put themselves under cover from its violence. Clouds muster with inconceivable rapidity, and come trooping up from the south-east, till they form a serried, black phalanx over Baiæ, and proceeding *viâ* Pozzuoli and Ischia, extinguish the stars and moon, and eclipse even the glare of Vesuvius, making the waters dark and the night hideous. Hark! it is coming now in earnest, and we happily are at home. That was not the rumble of a carriage along the Margellina, nor the report of distant fire-arms, but the muffled growl of the approaching tempest, the surcharge of that distended mass of discord which now fills the whole sky; the great battle between heaven and earth is at hand, and there is a dreadful pause before the first broadside is launched over the ghastly flood. Sometimes a rapid prelude of lightning, with a roll of muffled thunder, precedes the great outbreak; then down it comes irresistibly, booming over the grotto of Pausilippo, shaking the houses along the shore, re-echoing from the heights of St. Elmo, and making the cannon of the Castel dell' Uovo uneasy in their breachings. How abruptly the cats have ceased to caterwaul under our terrace! no wandering dog any longer bays the eclipsed moon, nor stays to bark at the unfrequent passenger; every other sound is either hushed or absorbed in the terrible voice of the storm; and once begun, there is no pause in its violence. Thunderings, more and more loud, come at shorter intervals, and its red artillery, more and more dazzlingly bright, appears to penetrate through the opacity of all things. 'Tis vain to close our eyes, and try to shut it out; the lightning flames in at the smallest chink of the shutters, revealing our coward countenances to one another's observation. Anon a few drops begin to patter against the window, and the assembled party, breathing more freely, hail the familiar sound; the rain increases, and is soon heard rushing down in torrents. Hopes are now entertained

that the deluge of water will drown the lightning, or render it innoxious; but that thought has scarcely given comfort, when a flash more blinding than any yet seen, accompanied by an instant loud explosion, which makes every shutter shake, and the whole house tremble, dissipates the illusion. That detonating crack was no *brutum fulmen*, but has done its work somewhere in our immediate proximity. As the howling of the wind subsides, the waves, lashed into fury, may be heard thundering against the cliffs. Oh, what a terrible night at sea!

Another hour, and the rain has entirely ceased; we throw open the casement, and look out upon the wild night with something like the '*suave mari magno*' feeling; then close the window and retire to bed, where, lulled by the distant roar of the waters, we soon fall asleep, and rise next morning to find everything much as it was at the same hour yesterday. Vesuvius, *more solito*, sending up his grey wreath, the bay scarcely ruffled, fishermen in all directions putting out their boats, and, but for the ponds about the house, no indication afforded that there had been any disturbance in the weather last night.* This calm—we are speaking of the latter end of September, when summer breaks up, and the periodical

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* Both the seas of Italy are subject to a very sudden agitation of their waters. The Adriatic fisherman has just as much need to invoke the Virgin

In mare irato,
In *subita procella*,

as the Neapolitan sailor. On one of the bastions of the Castle of Duino, on the shore of the Adriatic, an iron staff is erected during summer, and it is part of the duty of a sentinel, whenever a storm threatens, to raise a halberd on the summit of this staff. If, on the approach of the halberd, sparks are emitted, it is held sure that a storm is impending, and he tolls a bell, which sends forth the tidings of danger to the surrounding country.

The sentinel mounts the turret stair,
His halberd is raised in the sultry air,

rains set in—continues unimpaired till the afternoon, when the wind chops round and brings up again detachments

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And the sparks they danced
As the lightning glanced,
And he rings the deep-toned bell;
And the tocsin rolls
As the deep bell tolls,
Wide over the flood and fell.

Though the lark sing high
In that ocean sky,
On the verge of the darkling cloud,
There's the mischief dire
Of no earth-born fire,
Conceal'd in that purple shroud:
And the storm they know
Will not be slow,
When they hear that warning loud.

The swineherd hastes from the woodland height,
And hurries his herd before him:
The fisherman pulls with main and might,
Ere the first loud peal burst o'er him:
The peasant is fled
To the hill-side shed,
Ere the blinding flash he see;
Not a sound is heard,
Nor of beast nor bird,
Far over that wide country.

Hark! Duino's bell
Rings the warning knell!
In, in, with the wandering kine!
For the flinty shower
Shall its vengeance pour,
And the grape be torn from the vine:
Oh! there's many a knee,
In fair Italy,
Before the Madonna's shrine,
And heads all bare, in the convent prayer,
When that bell swings loud, and that spear is there!

(From 'Recollections of Italy,' by the late Prof. Badham).

of opaque clouds. The change is rapid: at twelve it is quite warm; at two the air is chilly and damp; a mizzling rain has begun; the horizon becomes more and more bounded; at length Capri is shut out from view; the sea is again on the work, and all on shore anticipate a renewal of last night's turmoil. The tailless canvas kites, which have hovered over the Marina since the morning, disappear, the players at La Cava and Morra are no longer heard in the streets, cabs hurry helter-skelter to complete their course and earn a fare before the sluices of the sky are opened; boats, once more lugged on land and covered with tarpaulin, ring with the jocund sounds of castanets, tambourines, and tarantella dancing; women are obliged to stridulate louder at each other as the wind rises and threatens to drown their voices in his own roar; barcaroles loll in red cloth bonnets at the doors of their huts; a damaged steamer or unrigged felucca comes straining in under bare poles, small craft are all fast anchored in the harbour, and the contracted horizon is soon without a sail. Before night the water is dashing over the fish-booths of the Santa Lucia, and sending up white foam through the bars of the sea-drains; while in the momentary remissions of the gathering storm, a crowd of little urchins of both sexes, naked to the knees, dash from their hiding-places to glean up spars, cephali, and shell-fish, left by each receding wave on the beach. With what impetuosity must those waves be driven, to bound twenty feet above the object they strike! at what a depth, too, must they act, to rake up the buried bivalves and launch them upon the upper current which dashes them on shore! It costs the poor fisherman much labour and toil to dredge twelve feet for these 'frutti di mare,'* now flung in such profusion on the beach.

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* The common name for a great variety of shell-fish. This 'fruit of the sea' is gathered in September. At the beginning of

It is in autumn that such violent changes take place; the summer months are rarely defaced by squalls, and pleasant is it, at that season, to anticipate the heat of the day, throw back the oppressive mosquito curtain, and, springing up, hasten to catch the first breath of morning, and the earliest indications of dawn at the open sash. Impressively beautiful, indeed, is that mysterious half-hour which, commencing in darkness and silence, ends in the awakened energies of a new morning. As the light breaks over the Bay, it seems like an epitome of the glories of the first day of creation, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. As yet the firmament is unconscious of the sun, and the high peak of St. Angelo, where he is to appear, presents no rosier

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the month, on a day pre-arranged by the collective crews, the bay, at an early hour in the morning, is arched across by a continuous line of fishing-boats, the whole under the conduct and management of a veteran Gripeus, who maintains order, and is referee in matters of dispute. The expedition is admirably organized; to anticipate the advance of the line towards shore would subject the invader to the '*accidentes*' and other voluble maledictions of the combined flotilla, to say nothing of legal proceedings, and incarceration at St. Elmo. There is but small temptation to transgress, for on the first day's dredging every man gets as much *fruit* from the bottom as he can well manage; and when the whole bay has been once fished, little remains to be gleaned, and the whereabouts of that little is a matter of uncertainty. So cleverly do they clear the bed of its produce, that by the end of October, when the first dredging terminates, the fisherman's gains have sunk from twenty carlini to one. After this, he will often thrust the brandished pole into the sand, and bring up nothing but mud and disappointment; a few *grains* a day is all his fixed allowance, and on this, and on what he can pick out of the sand, he has to find maccaroni for himself and family; till, by general consent, the shell-fishery is abandoned for that on the high seas, of which the produce now becomes much more remunerative. Of the different *sorts* of 'coquillage' which are included in this 'sea-fruit,' we intend to speak at length on a future occasion.

tinge than the rest of the sky; the pale moon—a very ghost of the bright red sphere of last night—reveals nothing; the stars, gradually receding, hide their tiny points in prescience of approaching day; the city lights are gone; the fire-boats undistinguishable; the ever-burning entrails of Vesuvius emit but a lurid glow. Strikingly silent, too, at this hour is the noisiest street of the noisiest capital in Europe: not a sound to be heard; the repose of the whole city is absolute; the fish-booths under the window, a few hours ago the crowded scene of perpetual jangle, merriment, and imprecation, exhibit only bare planks, with a few osier traps left over-night for the next day's repair; the Margellina, which, when we went to bed at eleven with a sirocco headache, was thronged with equipages and one diapason of crash-ing discord, is silent now; and all the open lattices, where balls and conversazioni were then in full activity, have long since been closed.

The clock strikes five,—convent bells begin to chime; it is time to start, while the streets are cool and empty, on our projected ramble to the fish-market. The foun-tain of the Lion, which supplies all the Pausilippo side of the town, still pours the limpid stream into the de-serted tazza, unencumbered by a single bucket; no claimant has yet appeared to draw water, nor is the ac-tive and impartial custode, who gives each man his minute, and keeps the women from fighting, yet at his important post; there is a faint gurgling rife among the rocks, and a monotonous murmur from the tiny wave-lets that run licking the pebbles without breaking on the shore, and then fall back again into the sea; a few boats tied together in a line, rise and sink with gentle motion, as the water swells and subsides noiselessly under their keels. Towards six o'clock, the change is rapid from this state of absolute repose to that of renewed life and activity. The first objects we meet on emerging from

the Palazzo are a flock of goats driven in from the Vomero, impatient to unload their full udders; a minute afterwards, a detachment of agile lazzaroni from Baiæ, with pyramids of figs on their heads, stride panting by, in haste to get their freight cool to market; and pannered donkeys, heavily laden with fruit and vegetables, are urged on with equal speed for the same purpose. The earliest barcaroles now appear; we accept the offer of a boat; and, after a delicious row in the calm, grey morning, arrive near the markets just as the sun is beginning to break cover, and early enough to find everything in perfection. Traversing two boats from Sorrento, one fragrant with a cargo of peaches and melons, the other redolent of pecore cheeses, which are certainly not fragrant, we land almost within a stone's throw of our destination.

The fish-market is in the oldest part of old Naples, where the narrow streets more resemble alleys, or the Scotch wynds, than our so-called thoroughfares; varying in breadth from sufficient space to allow two *caratelli* to pass abreast, to that which is only *carozzabile* for one. These caratelli are made to measure (like the Yarmouth carts), and so exactly, that the wheels nearly scrape the walls on opposite sides. It is dangerous to stand still when they are coming, as the mode of driving at Naples is like Jehu's, of the kind called furious; and but for the ready retreat of an open doorway, a passenger might quickly be crushed. The skill of meeting drivers is shown, not so much in avoiding a collision—which is often impossible—but in so dividing the shock between the two vehicles and the houses on either side, that they fracture neither their own nor their neighbour's panels. In some places the walls are rubbed away by these constant hard knocks, and afford a channel in which the wheels fit as they roll on. Looking up from the pavement at the strip of blue sky above, is like

peering from the bottom of a deep well. The balconies appear to approach overhead: long lean stockings, and burly forms of inflated shirts, are frequently blown across from one window to another; hands might be shaken by opposite neighbours, and even *sotto voce* conversations carried on, if Neapolitan signorinas ever spoke *sotto voce*. A flapping cotton sheet, with a print of the Madonna del Mare, commences the Strada del Mercato, where curious trades are carried on. One shop displays a large assortment of squibs, delft, and distaffs; at the next door, two men and their wives are making reed pipes, by clipping the stalks to a proper length, muzzling one end with a pewter ring, and inserting into it the upper part, previously bent, to form the mouthpiece: there stands a grain merchant, keeping a sharp look-out on his twenty sacks of pulse, all with their mouths open, to tell if anything be filched from them: next comes a *frittura* booth, with caldrons smelling strong and savoury; whence, for a *grano*, a saucerful of tomatas is served out, with a few snails, or an egg in purgatory,* in the centre: then comes a stall of soiled Punches, and gaily dressed marcheses in wood, with pictures of St. Anthony delivering his sermon to the fish, and a number of other piscatorial prints—such as St. Peter paying the tribute-money, the multitude fed in the wilderness, etc.; then *nobili albergi*, two once noble inns, now in pitiable plight, the 'Dolphin' and the 'Bay,' announcing on squalid sign-boards that they are kept—we beg pardon, *esercitati*—conducted—by rival *Dons* Ferdinando and Stephano. If anything be wanted in iron, from a bedstead to a bar, from an eel-spear to a Jew's harp, see the place that can furnish

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* Hard-boiled eggs, smothered in tomata sauce, are called, in allusion to the fiery red of the vegetable, 'eggs in purgatory.' Many of the lazzaroni make this their morning meal.

a supply; the hammer always ringing, and the bellows always blowing away. Plenty of strong-smelling shops are here, full of the unsavoury stock of last week's unsold fish; casks of pickled anchovies and origanized thunny at the door; shark's teeth, inflated diodons, and specimens of rough shagreen dangling from the ceiling. Here, too, are rival druggists, one with a musk-deer and a beaver depicted on his shutters; the other, showing a serpent and a cock frescoed on the walls: both fill with inconstant customers, who, as they find the nostrum bought behind one counter fail, make a purchase next week at the other. Rival to both, a *simplicista* hangs out his dried vipers for broth, *onisci* or wood-lice, a sovereign cure at Naples for diarrhœa, mallows, dulcamara, and angelica for catarrhal disorders, mole-skins for sore eyes; and is not without patrons: and here, as everywhere, are kid (capretto) stalls, with a dozen little carcases suspended from each.

We reach the market just the right time: while vine-leaves are being removed from the figs, sedge from the prawns, and gaping shell-fish are still lively enough in the moist laver to squirt water through their siphons, or to slam to the door against prying eyes; butchers are hanging up prime joints on yet unheated hooks; and flies, not warmed into activity, forbear awhile to commit depredations on fish, flesh, and fruit. The sellers are all at their posts, and the stream of buyers begins to pour in. Lemonade booths are serving out stores; *aquaritari*, tinkling a little bell, walk about with an inferior spirit to refresh the sailors as they come in from the night's fishing; hotel and convent cooks, in paper caps and white aprons, mix with the Phrygian bonnets of the lazzaroni and the cowls of mendicant friars, who, each with a picture of St. Anthony, St. Christopher, St. Peter, or some other piscatory saint, for the credulous to kiss and pay a grain for the privilege, soon levy a sufficient

sum to buy provisions; and here and there a figure dressed all in white, blinking through two holes, rattles a box by your ear, to collect coin for the benefit of souls in purgatory.

Now vehicles come in of various kinds, from the high-perched gig and lean horse, to the low, rumbling car drawn by an Umbrian ox, with a goodly freight of passengers in and about it, who all dismount at the entrance of the market. Here many a dispute takes place concerning the fare. Eight or ten soldiers will descend from some clumsy heavy machine, dragged on by a lean Hudibrastic horse, and after much haggling, ultimately determine not to pay anything: the poor vetturino may humbly appeal to the condition of the miserable beast to move compassion towards himself, but all to no purpose; till, exasperated by their laughter at his gesticulations and contortions, he is left tearing his hair, roaring, and imprecating the curse of St. Januarius's blood upon them in words blasphemous enough to make it curdle with horror. These military despots are the king's own pets, and do very much as they like; the only further notice taken of the victim is playfully to look at him through their fingers, in well-known allusion to prison-bars, and these sons of Mars have disappeared through the market-arch to purchase provisions for the messes of their respective regiments. Some carts are entirely filled with representatives of the Church, but these are jolly, portly fellows, who pay loyally, and hasten to secure the most delicate fare for the table of their different cœnobiums.

Following the crowd, we proceed into the fish-market, which is sufficiently characteristic and picturesque to deserve a brief notice. No part of Naples is more densely thronged; it is the very heart of the city; here the first movements of morning life begin, and here, too, the last stir in the evening remains palpitating, after ther

is general quiet elsewhere. 'Tis a fine place for brushing up recollections of the past; many traces of ancient manners and customs, not seen elsewhere, being still perceptible, independent of the antiquities offered daily for sale. Here are exhibited all those grotesque attitudes so copiously illustrated on Nola vases; here also, in accordance with ancient usage, as represented on the neighbouring frescoes and bas-reliefs, donkeys are led into the market, held by the tail, reeling under heavy panniers, and subjected to the cudgelling and ill-treatment which has never gone out of fashion, from the days of Balaam and Homer down to the present time. Looking about a little, another lively appeal to the past offers itself in the colossal out-of-door caldron propped upon stones, and bubbling up with hecatombs of simmering snails, a red sea of dissolving tomatas, or a whole sack of seething potatoes; around may be seen figures, kneeling to feed the flames beneath; pouring in water, or perhaps dragging out a pig to scrape. In such a vessel, pictures—not contemporary—represent the martyrdom of St. John in boiling oil, when he came out stronger from the bath; and such also, substituting satyrs for men, forms the subject of many an ancient engraved gem or bas-relief. The very religion of the Cross is here debased by association with ancient superstition; early as it is, in yon idol-shop, see a modern Demetrius and his craftsmen already busy, making to order saints by the score for convents, street shrines, or præsepes, and placing the Virgin Mary on Diana's crescent to denote the Immaculate Conception!

In the centre of a dirty little largo, something like the confluence of the Seven Dials, where the sale of fish is principally carried on, is one of those short ugly monuments called Aguglia, which are so profusely stuck over Naples; architectural scarecrows, neither column, pyramid, nor obelisk, but seemingly devices taken from

the chess-board or jeweller's shop,—Brobdignag pawns in marble, or colossal seal-handles in stucco, capped either with a gilt Madonna, or a flag, bearing Santa Maria on one side, and St. Januarius on the other.

Ever and anon, accompanied by a fresh crowd, and announced by beat of drum, new arrivals of fish, just landed, are paraded, as was the sturgeon in days of yore, in long procession to the spot. Next come the *Capi del Speranzelli*,* or chiefs of the market, with their huge scales, which being speedily adjusted, the fish is duly weighed and registered, and then sold in lots. Messmen, *trattori*, *chefs*, convent cooks, crowd round the auctioneer, who forthwith begins, *à la* Robins, to put up for sale the *pesce nobile*, the *chefs d'œuvre* of the market. 'Ah! fichi! fichi! che belle cose! a quanto, signori miei?' etc., looking interrogatively at the principal buyers, hoping thereby to excite them to outbid one another; and the same fierce contention then commences which was exhibited nineteen centuries ago, when Lucullus purchased mullet and parrot-fish for his entertainments, and Apicius wrote aphorisms in his study on preparing and cooking them. There is always a loud and amusing competition between the hotel and convent cooks, each acting according to the instruction of his chief, but the former generally bearing away the prime specimens.

It is impossible to conceive anything like the din and

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* There are about a dozen of these men, elected out of the confraternity of fishermen, who, for the consideration of one *grain* (the fourth part of a farthing) per pound, weigh, register, and dispose of the fish to their servants for sale; and so scrupulously exact are they in repaying the proceeds to the fishermen, that they obtain, as a reward for their honesty—which seems the best policy even among such rogues as these—a considerable competence, and sometimes a fortune. In all cases of dispute, application is made to the consul (every trade has its consul), who calls a court, and from his decision there is no appeal.

discord of an Italian or Sicilian market at the market-hour. 'None but itself can be its parallel,' and yet the whole is effected by some score only of human tongues let loose at will. Everybody there either is, or seems to be, in a passion, each trying to outscream, outroar, outbellow, and outblaspheme his neighbour, till the combined uproar fills the whole area, and rises high above it. The men are all Stentors; the women perfect Maenads; the children a set of howling imps, whom nothing short of Thuggism could pacify: it is no unfrequent spectacle in this frantic neighbourhood to see some baby clenching its tiny hands and boneless gums in concentrated passion, tearing at the rudiments of hair, and screaming with all its puny strength; or, in yet wilder extravagance, its arms in the air, hurling defiance at its own mother, who, standing at bay with the mien of a Tisiphone, strives to drown her baby's voice in her own frenzied treble, and looks as if she could drown him, too, for a very small consideration.

The noise arouses every living creature, even to the flies, who are stimulated into consciousness, and begin to buzz full half-an-hour sooner than the warmth of the sun would have awakened them; hungry dogs, fearless of observation, press close on the heels of the bawling, pre-occupied crowd; sleek cats beyond the reach of dogs come creeping over the fish-stalls, and prescient rats, peeping from obscure holes, can scarce refrain from rushing out *en masse* upon the offal, shortly to be left at their disposal.

Every market, to be enjoyed, should be visited by sunrise, ere its stores have been diminished by purchasers, and while yet God's daily bounty to mankind is in its prime and freshness. Compare Covent Garden Market, for instance, at five o'clock on a July morning, redolent with moss-roses and strawberries, and Covent Garden on the same day at noon, when the fruit is fermenting,

and the flowers fading in the sun. But this is more particularly true of Italian than of English markets, owing to the much greater heat, which sooner tells unfavourably on the supply of food: and it applies more especially to the pescheria. The first half-hour when the fish are taken out of the water, is the time to see them in their glory; after that, the brilliancy of the exhibition closes; though even then the vast variety of shapes, the endless complexity of warlike accoutrements, and their many contrivances for escaping danger, must occasionally not only strike the eye but arrest the attention of the most incurious non-observer, as he beholds here lying before him the amassed treasures of the deep.

Flat fish, with eyes distorted, square, ovoid, rhomboid, long,
Some cased in mail, some slippery-backed, the feeble and the strong;
Soft-finned,*(1) and armed with weapons, to poison, stab, or maul,(2)
Their baby-brood who educate to drum, shrill, grunt, and call;(3)
Who build at sea,(4) who bed on shore,(5) who ox-like chew the cud,(6)

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* (1) Malaco- and Acantho-pterygians. (2) Scorpæna, trigon, balæstra, and many raiæ. (3) The pogonias *drums*, the umbra or old-wife *shrills*, the gurnard *grunts*, and Clearphus makes mention of some Arcadian fish which are plainly vocal; he says, *φθέγγονται γὰρ καὶ πολὺν ἦχον ἀποτελοῦσι.* (4) Aristotle describes the nidification of this remarkable fish. (5) The anabas (from *ἀναβαίνω*), because he climbs trees and roosts in the branches, thus accomplishing Horace's prodigy—

> Piscium et summa genus hæsit ulmo,
> Nota quæ sedes fuerat columbis;

which might be rendered—

> And Anabas now climbs to rest
> On high-perch'd palm, in turtle's nest;

and Exocætus, whose name tells its story. (6) Scarus—'solus qui ruminat escas.'—*Ov.* (7) Luna. (8) Loligo. (9) Narke. (10) Blue-finned gurnard.

Who crest the waves with liquid light,(7) or ink the sable flood,(8)
Who numb the boatman's sinewy arm;(9) on azure wings who soar,(10)
Pelagians from the open sea, and tribes that hug the shore;
Sedan'd on poles, or dragg'd on hooks, or pour'd from tubs, like water,
Gasp side by side, together piled, in one promiscuous slaughter.

But the great beauty of fish, after all, is colour,—lovely, but, alas! evanescent as the rainbow itself: the inhabitants of the sea cannot be preserved except as mummies; they are the opprobrium of taxidermy; stuffing and alcohol alike absorb their hues; and in museums their blanched scales form a ghastly contrast to the gay and gaudy integuments of the denizens of earth and air by which they are surrounded.

While blazing breast of humming-bird and Io's stiffen'd wing
Are bright as when they first came forth new-painted in the spring.
While speckled snake and spotted pard their markings still display,
Though he who once embalm'd them both, himself be turn'd to clay,
On fish a different fate attends, nor reach they long the shore
Ere fade their hues like rainbow-tints, and soon their beauty's o'er.
The eye that late in ocean's flood was large and round and full,
Becomes on land a sunken orb, glaucomatous and dull;
The gills, like mushrooms, soon begin to turn from pink to black,
The blood congeals in stasis thick, the scales upturn and crack;
And those fair forms, a Veronese, in art's meridian power,
With every varied tint at hand, and in his happiest hour,
Could ne'er in equal beauty deck and bid the canvas live,
Are now so colourless and cold, a Rembrandt's touch might give.

CHAPTER VIII.

PERCIDÆ, OR PERCHES.

Nec te delicias mensarum Perca silebo.—*Auson.*

BY far the greater number of scaly fish belong to the order Acanthopterygii, or those with spinous fins. The first family of this great section are the Percidæ, which includes, as all large and artificial divisions of species necessitates, many ill-consorting members, most of whom, however, are so far associated as to possess in common an oblong body, invested with hard rough scales, serrated or spinous gill-flaps, and jaws, vomer, and palate well furnished with teeth.

Besides the well-known river-perch, which lends its name to the rest, there are many other distinguished percidæ worthy of separate notice: among the more remarkable of these are the labrax, of Greek and Latin notoriety; the serranus, or *χάνη* of the Greeks—that wondrous hermaphrodite, which,

> Self-concipient, breeds from no embrace,
> Commingles roes, and multiplies its race;*

the Mediterranean barber (anthias sacer) cased in glittering scales, which from ruby turn yellow and then white;

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* 'Ex se
Concipiens channe gemino fraudata parente.'—*Ovid.*
Aristotle also speaks of a fish which contains both sexes in its own person; it is probable that this was the species intended, since Cavolini has ascertained that the roe of the *Serranus* (Cuvier) is half soft and half hard,—that is, contains both male milt and female ovary. These two portions operate upon each other, and the acts of begetting and conceiving are one.

the German *sandre*, pike-perch, one of the best-flavoured of the family; the *lates nobilis* of the erudite, somewhat freely rendered 'cock-up fish' by the Bengalese; the giant of his genus, the true *lates antiquorum*, or *perca nilotica*; and at the other end of the scale, the group of diminutive perchlings, with transparent bodies, called ambassis;* the stinging weever—trachini (otter-pike of Pennant), together with the hideous, hare-lipped uranoscopus, the size of whose gall-bladder, and the singular position of whose eyes, attracted early the attention of naturalists, are all percidæ. Of this short list a much shorter selection must content us for the present; and, beginning with everybody's acquaintance, the river-perch, we shall next say a few words concerning one or two others of the more remarkable fish enumerated in the above aperçu.

The perch comes of very ancient stock, and may boast of having established himself in almost every country of the known world without ever changing his name. From the Greek *πέρκη* of Aristotle, are derived all the present European appellatives. The first meaning of the word *πέρκος*, as an adjective, is that dark blue which olives and grapes assume on ripening; *περκνὸς* is also the proper name of some species of eagle, so denominated by Homer from its dark plumage; and as applied to the perch it may indicate the sable bands which bar his back. But the vagueness of all adjectives of colour in ancient authors is notoriously great. Who, for instance, can ever know how much of grey and how much of green went to make up the glaucomatic hue of Minerva's iris; to what wines, however deep, the term *οἶνοπα πόντον*, an epithet of the sea, could possibly apply; or, in Latin, of what hue the wings of Horace's *olor* may have been,

* One of these, the A. Commersoni, occurs in ponds of the Isle of Bourbon, and is salted and cured after the manner of anchovies.

to what extent such epithets as 'ferrugineus' and 'purpureus' might stretch, when both words are used by Virgil and Ovid for one flower, and that the hyacinth? From such instances, and many more which might be added, it must be plain that adjectives expressive of colour are by no means nice to a shade; and we doubt not that *πέρκος* did service for a variety of other objects in natural history besides Aristotle's perch and Homer's eagle.

This fish was held in high esteem in ancient days by both Greeks and Latins: Arthestratus uses the inviting term *ἀνθεσίχρως*, and a Latin poet calls it 'deliciæ mensarum:' Ausonius speaks very highly of it:

> Nor let the Muse, in her award of fame,
> Illustrious perch, unnoticed pass thy claim;
> Prince of the prickly cohort, bred in lakes
> To feast our boards, what sapid boneless flakes
> Thy solid flesh supplies! though river-fed,
> No daintier fish in ocean's pastures bred
> Swims thy compeer; scarce mullet may compete
> With thee for fibre firm and flavour sweet.

Galen prescribes it to invalids; and even the monks of Salerno, no advocates for fish-diet in general, allot it some commendation in their hygeian code. Fracastorius, in his fine poem on a foul disease,* where he proscribes almost all other species, allows, and even recommends this.

Several places are mentioned by a variety of authors as famous for perch. Ausonius praises those of the Moselle. Ælian speaks in equally high terms of those of the Danube; and Platina of the Po and Lago Maggiore. The river Rhine and the Swiss lakes were early known to produce very fine ones; but perhaps the perch of our Norfolk Broads are as good as any; and it is doubtful whether a genuine specimen was ever taken from a

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* De Morb. Gallic.

Swiss lake larger than the one fatted near London, in the Serpentine, which reached, according to Yarrell, the weight of nine pounds, though even this falls short of another cited by the same author,—a Lapland monster, measuring twelve inches from the extremity of the nose to the edge of the gill-cover.

That perch require clear fresh water for their very existence, accounts perhaps for the wholesomeness of the flesh, always superior, from this circumstance, to that of either eel, carp, or tench, which, from feeding everywhere, often taste of the weeds and feculence where they dwell. The ancients have not left us any hints as to how perch were cooked: the present practice over the continent is to stew them either in vinegar, fresh grape, orange juice, or other sour sauce: but though this is certainly the common way in some parts of Italy, at the Lago Maggiore they are spitted in their scales, and basted while roasting with the same acid juice: in Holland, butter is added. Though a scaly fish, they vitiate Aristotle's dictum, and are best in roe.

All perch open their mouth wide when taken out of the water; and long before we knew that one of the family was called *χάνη* (the gaper), we had entered him in an old note-book as 'the wide-mouthed perch, that dies with open gills.' It is generally when hungry that he, like most yawners, yawns widest; like the *χάνη*, bringing up at such times, like an angry camel, the stomach into his mouth, a circumstance which Galen explains in an ingenious manner: he says, that as famished persons stretch forth the hands to snatch at victuals, so the stomach of this fish protrudes the gullet for the same purpose; and generally, he adds, it will be seen that whenever the conditions of hunger, a small swallow, and large lax fauces are combined, the craving stomach will be found making these instinctive hand-like efforts after food. The friendship said to subsist between perch

and tench with the savage pike, would be singular were it not easily explained without having recourse to animal magnetism, by the slime of the one and the spines of the other. On the Nile,* the crocodile, a mightier tyrant than the pike, shows the same forbearing favour to the perch, and no doubt for the same reason. His prickly lophoderme is indeed a formidable affair; nor was it unadvisedly that the Saxons represented one of their gods (an old man holding in the left hand a chaplet of roses and in the right a wheel) standing with naked feet on the back of a perch, as an emblem of patience in adversity and constancy in trial!† These spines have been known to produce fatal consequences: a young man catching a perch in his hand while bathing, and sportively putting it into his mouth, was choked by the fish getting into his throat, and died in terrible agonies before any assistance could be obtained. The roe of the perch consists of a concatenation of eggs knit‡ together into meshwork, according to Cuvier, by means of a strong mucus, and, as Strabo says, bearing a resemblance to frog-spawn.

As perch is a very common fish, it is singular that heraldry should not have made more use of it; one family alone, of the name of Oldfield, bears three perch as an armorial distinction.§

The Stinging Weever.

Draco marinus ad spinæ suæ quâ ferit venenum, ipse impositus, vel cerebro poto prodest.—*Pliny.*

It is not a safe thing to etymologize in a foreign language. An Italian, who regards weever and fever as the

* Strabo. † Fabricius.

‡ 'Four or five of these eggs are enclosed in one common membrane, giving to the mass the appearance of hexagonal meshes; each egg is about the size of a poppy-seed.'
Moule.

same word under different forms, is naturally enough puzzled to imagine a plausible reason for our appellation: the name, however, is derived from the French synonym, *la vire*,—a word designating the strong tenacity of life manifested by this small group, the otter-pikes of Pennant. There are several sorts of weevers, all characterized by formidable prickles (or stings, as they are called, and popularly believed to be); but we shall confine ourself to one large species peculiar to the Mediterranean, generally known and especially dreaded for the pungency and cachectic character of the wounds it inflicts.

The early Greek name for this fish was *δράκων θαλάσσιος*, the sea-dragon; or simply, *δρακαυὶς* (Ath.); the modern Greek name, as Rondolet informs us, is *δράκαινα*, whence the modern Latin *trachinus*, corrupted by Sicilian and Neapolitan sailors into *tragine*. The ancient Latin name for this species is *araneus*; and it is still called *aregne* in the patois of Marseilles, and *pesce ragno* at Genoa. Belon reports it to occur very abundantly off the islands in the Ægean Sea. There seem to be two species, a larger and a less. The first attains from a foot and a half to two feet in length; the other, though not above half that size, is more feared by the boatmen, from a propensity to conceal itself in the sand, where, as Cuvier says, from being unsuspected, it becomes more dangerous. Two wonderful things have been reported of it by Ælian and Belon. The first affirms that, when hooked, if the angler attempts to land the fish with the right hand, it plunges violently and resists; if with the left hand, that it offers no opposition 'cedere et capi;' and Belon says, he has heard from many fishermen that when the araneus strikes another fish during the pairing season, a number of little ones similar to itself in appearance originate in the cut. No fish wounds, if we except those of the pastinaca skate, are so much

shunned as that of the weever; but as this perch is pronounced on all hands to be excellent food, epicures do not mind paying handsomely for the risks run by others in its capture. We hear much more frequently, however, of the piquancy of the spines than of that of the flesh; and the number, diversity, and strangeness of old and more recent remedies attest at once the many mischiefs they occasioned, and the credulity of mankind, who, ever sceptical in the wrong place, have in all ages

> Swallow'd nonsense and a lie,
> With greediness and gluttony.

Pliny's recipe was a glass of absinthe, no disagreeable remedy, if they made it in ancient Rome as it is now prepared in modern Paris. Galen, Dioscorides, and many other writers, confidently recommend applying the culprit himself, if at hand, over the surface of the wound. Paul of Ægina advises that the patient quaff a light tisane thickened with his brains; Celsus, to rub the injured part, and then to fasten on a fillet of the raw fish epidermically. Avicenna recommends a poultice of leeks; Serapio, a plaster of dried figs and ground barley. Various other less renowned authorities prescribe fomentations of sulphur and vinegar, briony in decoction, or salves made of the crushed liver. Rondolet writes that the French sailors have recourse to the bruised leaves of the lentiscus, and consider this their sheet-anchor. Lastly, Bernardinus Castellata, of Genoa, (whom his countryman Aldrovandi describes as a 'vir cum humanissimus tum secretorum naturæ indefatigabilis investigator,') announces, as the result of his 'indefatigable investigation,' that nothing is so sovereign in a remedial capacity here as a small species of thlaspi (shepherd's purse) found growing by the sea-shore; 'but,' adds the cautious author, who has been at great pains to bring all the above authorities together, 'it should be

observed that these remedies, to succeed, must be applied before gangrene has supervened, for in that case the only certain cure is,'—not, reader, excision, nor the potential nor actual cautery—but 'to rub the mangled flesh with a compost of the same fish in vinegar, and then to bind tight over the gangrened spot the head of a salted mullet!' We sometimes speculate, in turning over the pages of effete old nostrums, (now, thanks to a much more generally diffused knowledge, repudiated even by intelligent irregulars,) what fees doctors received in days of yore for such prescriptions, and marvel how they had the face to take any. Even Celsus, whose good sense and Latinity were alike above suspicion before they were complimented by Dr. Parr, is anything but 'par negotiis' in his medical formularies. Now there is not an apothecary's lad preparing to pass 'the Hall' (and plucked, sometimes, because he is not able to translate his Celsus) who would not certainly be plucked, and deserve it too, were he to exhibit to the examiners such prescriptions for pill, draught, or linctus as the Roman doctor, 'more majorum,' put together. But there is no need to go so far back: all our greatest improvements here are scarcely a century old. Let us only take up a pharmacopœia, or an angler's guide, of that period, and cast an eye over the strange recipes adopted by the practitioners of the healing and piscatory arts, for the cure of fevers and the catching of fish, and he must be fond of paradox, and a very determined 'laudator temporis acti' indeed, who would not admit that the world in the course of the last century has gone very much ahead, and that medicine has kept pace with the world.

The Labrax.*

Illum sumina ducebant, atque altilium lanx,
Hunc pontes Tiberinos inter captus catillo.—*Lucil.*

Λάβραξ, Lupus, Spigola, Bars, and Basse: the subject of all these Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English synonyms, is a well-known fish. The Greek name is of somewhat doubtful origin, and may be significant of either one or other of the basse's two besetting sins —violence or gluttony. The Latin name, lupus, is at least clear, and accords perfectly with the acknowledged character of the sea-wolf,† to whose account both public award and Greek and Latin graduses place such epithets as 'daring,' 'greedy,' 'rapacious,' 'terrible,' and 'fierce,' as appropriate and well deserved. The Romans, indeed, changed the name of this favourite fish from *lupus* to *laneus*; a term intended to designate, not woolliness, but whiteness of fibre. This fish was highly esteemed amongst luxurious livers, both Attic and Roman, but was not held everywhere in equal respect. Though born, and in a great measure bred, at sea, it was only those taken in fresh water which fetched fancy prices,‡ for most rivers were thought to impart flavour and to im-

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* Centropoma lupus, Varro, de Re rustica, lib. iii. cap. 1. Pliny, lib. ix. cap. 16, 17, 51, 54. Labrax, Elian, lib. i. p. 30; lib. 9–7; lib. 10–2. Ath. lib. 12, p. 310; lib. 14, p. 662. Opp. Hal. 2, line 34, 253, etc.

† There was a so-called water-sheep, πρόβατον, which, feeding in the same pastures with the wolf, would very often give rise to a rehearsal of Æsop's fable, of the wolf and lamb on land.

‡ This is at variance with the testimony of Rondolet, who pronounces those caught at sea to be the finest in flavour next to those bred in sea-ponds, and those which frequent rivers the poorest of any: but Rondolet's experience is not generally borne out by modern amateurs. In some rivers this fish is still eagerly sought, and the basse of Mr. Arnold's fresh-water stews at Guernsey are said to be finer than any sea-fish.

prove the condition of his solids; but as tawny Thames has a pre-eminence amongst rivers for the quality of its porter, so had tawny Tiber for the quality of its basse. But here, again, all were not equally famous. The Tiber had its noted holes and haunts, and there was one particular reach, often mentioned by Latin writers, 'between the two bridges,'* whence all the finest specimens used to be fetched: here they acquired that delicate *bouquet* so appreciable to Roman connoisseurs, who, according to Horace, knew at a bite whether what their fishmonger had supplied had really come from this site, or from some more distant bend of the river towards Ostia. Many went so far as to ignore the existence of this fish from any other stream. One egregious epicure carried his impertinence so far as actually to spit out a mouthful of basse on his plate, at a country friend's house, with the laconic Beau-Brummelism to his host—'Peream! nisi piscem putavi'—'Pardon me, but really I thought it was fish!' Horace speaks in the same flattering strain of intra-mural basse: 'hic Tiberinus'—as if nothing else that swam in the Tiber was fit to compare with him; and even Lucilius—though he has coined for this scavenger of sinks the new and appropriate name catillo†—hands him round at a Roman

* At this very point—a sadly picturesque reach of the river it is, looking upon a parched malarious wilderness, with nothing but ruin and ruins around, in the way to the English cemetery—we have often stopped to watch the perpetually revolving net used in this fishery go round and round with the current, while some pallid boatman, fit satellite to such a stream, has stood up feebly in the tethered old boat, worn and wan as the Stygian ferryman himself, ague in his veins, and no quinine in his pocket, eyeing the ascending meshes, and putting forth a spectral arm to secure the prey, a frittura of argentine (the Roman pearl-fish), cephali, alose or small basse, and then letting down the net again into the floating feculence of the river.

† 'Quod stercora circa ripas *catillarent*.'—*Macr.*

banquet, in conjunction with game, sows' dugs, and all the delicacies of the season; leaving us to infer that, but for the extravagance of this luxury, he would not have disapproved of the dish. Juvenal, who lived when the public taste had undergone some revision, speaks disparagingly of lupus; and Galen recommends to shun a fish which, even when alive, was tainted to the core, and which, however fat, was never, as he tells us, in condition, but always rank in flavour and prone to run into putrescence immediately; and Jovius, in times much nearer our own, whilst speaking of the preposterous price still paid by the luxurious for these culinary abominations, repeats and abundantly corroborates all that Galen says of their foul feeding, and adds, from his own observation, that besides eating offal, they have no objection to snakes, he having sometimes found the inside of a basse stuffed with the coils of a large coluber, which had been carried down by the stream near his haunt, and there greedily seized upon and pouched. Well may we wonder, then, with Macrobius, in what the merit of the Tiber lupus consisted, or whether it had any.

After this river, many others claimed to breed excellent basse: the Timavus (Brenta), near Venice, which runs through the flat marshes of the district, was one; but here their good condition and rich flavour were due, not to the fat of sinks and cloacas, but to the mixed nature of the waters they frequented:

> Lancus Euganei lupus excipit ora Timavi,
> Æquoreo dulces cum sale pastus aquas.*

Basse from the Acherusian Marsh in Epirus were famed both for size and flavour; and the same praise was accorded to those captured in the Sicilian Elorus. In

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* Martial.

Greece, Milesian labrax were in highest esteem, and even rivalled the lupus of the Tiber; Archestratus calls this variety *θεόπαιδα λάβρακα*, the divine labrax; and an invitation to partake of one would seem sufficient to have turned people's heads, and made it necessary to remind the elated guests, in words from the comedy of 'The Knights,' that 'it was not because they had eaten Milesian labrax that they were privileged to make a disturbance.' Elian, speaking of the basse of India, represents them (agreeably to the custom of describing oriental productions in his day) as of gigantic dimensions, but says nothing of their quality or flavour.

Although these fish are fond of running up rivers and paying inland visits for a time, they do not, says Galen, breed in fresh water, but always retire for that purpose to the salt marshes, *λιμνοθαλάσσας*, where they begin to fill out their skins, and grow rapidly to full stature; this is seldom more than three feet, though here and there, owing, it is supposed, to some circumstances peculiarly favourable for development, individuals have been taken of far larger size; thus Belon had seen one weighing fifteen pounds, and Salvianus reports another of twenty pounds' weight.

The basse suffers much from severe weather, and often goes blind in winter; the reason whereof, as assigned by Rondolet, will amuse the incredulous. 'It is,' says he, 'because of the stones they carry in their heads, which become very cold and troublesome, when the temperature is at a low range.' The sickly and impoverished state of the fish, however, during winter, and perhaps the disposition to glaucoma as well, may arise from their propensity to swim near the surface of the water, so as to become much more exposed than others to all vicissitudes of weather.

As regards the capture of the basse, both poets and fishermen agree that he is not easily taken prisoner,

proving a troublesome customer, and well skilled in artful devices to perplex and elude alike the man of boat and meshes and him of rod and line. When enclosed in a net, he has two alternatives for escape—either to dig a hole for his body in the sand, and there lie perdu till the meshes have passed harmlessly over his back; or else, like an expert prison-breaker, to make an underground passage, and emerge on the other side of the hempen walls:

> Clausus rete Lupus ... immanis et acer
> Dimotis cauda latitat submissus arenis.*

When hooked by the angler, he will shake his head, tussle a little at the line, and after enlarging the wound, slip away, leaving the disappointed fisherman to readjust his tackle. This proceeding is also recorded by the same Latin poet in the following words:—

> Lupus acri concitus irâ
> Discursu fertur vario, fluctusque ferentes
> Prosequitur, quassatque caput, dum vulnere sævus
> Quassato cadat hamus, et ora patentia linquat.

It is not therefore unadvisedly that Aristophanes calls this perch the wisest of fish, *ἰχθύων σοφώτατος*, since he thus cleverly escapes from imminent dangers by forethought and address; but every one has a weak point to lead him astray: the lupus's foible is an inordinate greediness, which, when choice food can be obtained, renders all this promptitude and cunning of no avail; and his death is often brought about by means of a very insignificant enemy. Enjoying a dish of prawns exceedingly, and not caring to anticipate consequences, the lupus, on meeting with a shoal, opens his mouth, and at a gulp fills it with hundreds of these nimble and prickly crustaceans, who no sooner find themselves on the wrong

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* Ovid.

side of the barrier, and going down 'quick into the pit' of their enemy's stomach, than they fasten on with all despatch, and running the sharp serrated rostrums of their heads right into his palate and fauces, stick to their victim, who, unable either to detach or cough them up, dies ere long of spasmodic croup, or in the more lengthened anguish of an ulcerated sore-throat! 'Prawns,' says Oppian, who tells precisely the same story as Elian, (and they can't both be wrong!) 'though small creatures and weak withal, yet by subtilty will often kill their enemy the labrax, that greedy fish, who so well deserves his name and his fate.' Oppian then relates how, when the labrax has hastily filled his mouth with these pigmy creatures, the little jumpers, placed in this perilous position, unable alike to resist or retreat, spring and bound about for some time unheeded within the jaws of their voracious and unsuspecting victim, who, only intent upon taking in fresh supplies, suffers himself to be pierced and wounded in the tender parts of his fauces and throat by their beaked foreheads, till at length, by oft-repeated punctures and lacerations, they choke the labrax, and so destroy their destroyer.*

The basse constituted one of the three dishes of the 'tri-patina petits soupers' of ancient Rome. Heliogabalus, not content with so poor a luxury as that of the whole fish, extracted and ate the brains and milts alone; and Rondolet affirms the liver to be infinitely better than that either of goose or turkey; the dried roe, too, is still held in high esteem, and constitutes the *παταριχα*

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* Oft has the wolf the bearded squadrons fought,
And of the luscious food too dearly bought:
No pity to the shelly race was shown,
'Twas therefore just their fate should prove his own.
They wound with pain, what they with pleasure fill,
Subdue their conqueror, and dying, kill.

John Jones, trans. Opp.

of modern Greece—a substitute among soakers, and some of them say not a bad one, for botargue and caviare; but though the roe is good, the fish which owns it is not good in roe, according to Aristotle's observation of scaly fish generally, that in roe they are out of season, *φαῦλοι κύοντες*. Most modern writers agree that this fish is in capital condition after the roe has been deposited, and when they have fattened for a month or six weeks in fresh water, which, as far as this particular species is concerned, confirms what Aristotle says. Galen holds that fish in general, and lupus in particular, are very sparingly nutritious, and incapable of yielding any but a poor, thin blood to those who eat them. Celsus, without expressing any general strictures upon this lenten diet, pronounces the lupus to be sorry fare, and not one to get fat upon.

As many of the finny tribe, and this in particular, were formerly much used in medicine as well as dietetically, we may just mention that a famous recipe for removing specks in the cornea was a collyrium composed of frankincense, lyncurium (a gem extracted from the kidneys of the lynx), vulture's gall, and the bile of the basse, mixed with honey; to which we say, 'misce omnime,' rub up in a mortar, and make the experiment!

The lupus, we find from our Naples note-book, forms one of a beautiful small group of mosaic fish disinterred at Pompeii, and now in the Museum of Antiquities.

Uranoscopus Hemerocœtus.

Αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ψαμάθοισι πανημέριος τετάνυσται
Εὖδων.—Opp.

The name of this fish, *uranoscopus*, or 'sky-gazer,' is derived from the position of the eyes, which are singularly planted on the crown of the head. For a like reason he is popularly designated by Mediterranean barca-

roles, *pesce-prete*, or priest-fish. The other appellatives, of *psammodytes*, or sand-fish, *ἡμερόκοιτος*, day-dozer, and *νυκτερὶς*, the bat, correspond to other characteristic traits in his natural history. The old Greek name employed by Aristotle, and transcribed unchanged by Pliny, is *καλλιώνυμος*: not that this fish has anything to do with beauty, for a more hideous fiend fright is not brought to market; but the Greek compound, according to Hesychius, bears, besides its obvious, a more recondite meaning, which tallies so well with the conformation of the fish, that the sailors at Marseilles have coined two expressive *patois* words, which seem, though of course they are not, a translation of the Aristotelian epithet; an epithet which, according to Rondolet, 'no modest matron of Marseilles would ever think of pronouncing, on account of its exceeding impropriety.'

So much for the names. As to the person of the possessor of these various aliases, he is, in a word, hideous; and may be said to abuse the privileged ugliness even of the tadpole, whose general figure and contour he accurately represents; a pair of very malign, unpriestly, glaring eyes, misdirected upwards; the broad gutter of a mouth which runs immediately below the orbits; a long vermicular process for inveigling unwary fish, vibrating from to time, like a serpent's tongue, in front of a pair of gaping jaws, add considerably to the ill-favoured appearance of the callionymus; whilst two sharp spines bristling on the shoulders help to render his person yet more unattractive: such is the repulsive exterior of this fish. The interior organization presents a remarkable phenomenon, which, from the time when Aristotle first called attention to it, to this hour, has attracted the attention and excited the surprise of all who have witnessed an autopsy of this fish. On cutting him open, an immense white liver at once presents itself to view, and attached to it a large pendulous bag, distended with

an oily-coloured gall, both wholly incommensurate with his size (which is seldom above a foot long), and occupying together a large tract of the cavity of the interior. The redundancy of this creature's bile was so well known in Greece, that Menander introduced it as a subject for pleasantry in his comedies. 'I'll make you more bilious than a callionymus,' says one of his dramatis personæ; and 'unless you budge, and quickly, so as to stir up the bile of this callionymus,' words occurring in a fragment from another comedian, show that this peculiarity of the fish had passed into a proverbial byword, to indicate persons of choleric or morose temperament. Great use, or perhaps we should rather say, large employment, was made of this fish's gall. Galen, writing *ex professo* on the subject of bile, takes occasion to observe, while comparing the different sorts, 'whereas that procured from the ox is more remedial than many others, it is inferior to the hyena's, which again is surpassed by the gall of the callionymus.' He employed this (where we employ so successfully the nitrate of silver solution) for conjunctivitis, or sore eyes; and mixing it with fennel-juice, Attic honey, and hyena's or viper's or goat's or tortoise's gall, gave his fiat for a mess, with which he and his patients appear to have been perfectly satisfied. Longinus's far-famed instance and illustration of the sublime, from Genesis, 'Fiat lux' (let there be light), will be familiar doubtless to most of our readers. But every sublime has its bathos; and in direct antithesis to his quotation might be cited almost all the first fiats of Hygeia's oracles,

> When med'cine, heavenly maid, was young,
> While yet in early Greece she *sung*,

which have descended to us, both from Athens and Rome, and are, for the most part, instances of the very sublime of the absurd. Even now that we have mended our medicines, there is still something ludicrous sticking

to the bottom of a prescription, which requires Latin to make it pass demurely; ourself or some learned brother orders a combination of things more or less soluble or miscible in water, and then claps under it, Fiat: let it be or become (what else could it be or become but) a mixture or a draught; or mix equal parts of James' and Dover's powders, and, Fiat: let them be or become a powder. When, we wonder, will some approved kitchen oracle, versed as well as his underlings in Latin, issue receipts or prescriptions in that language, and subscribe with the initials of his name a fiat for a plum-pudding or a *vol-au-vent?*

The high repute in which Galen holds 'callionymus gall' for removing specks from the cornea, suggested to commentators the luminous idea that Tobit's blindness was cured by it; which, in the present state of our ignorance, it would be impossible to disprove. The consequence of so much redundant bile to stimulate the stomach is an inordinate appetite, which causes this creature to be held out by moralists as a beacon and warning to gluttons; just as the ant and the bee are proposed as examples to the unthrifty and idle. Thus Oppian, speaking of his bulimic propensities, says, 'the hemerocœte is devoured by an unrestrained, inexorable appetite, and crams till his belly bursts, or the undigested load drags him to the bottom; sometimes, surprised at his ceaseless meal, he falls a prey to some larger fish. Behold here the sad and sure effects of intemperance! and let all men learn from it to dread and curb sloth; to shun excess; relinquish the short-lived pleasures of the epicure; indulge very moderately in the good things of life; and you especially whose belly has been your god, learn at length to moderate a voracity which will only increase the more it is indulged; behold, ye day-dozers and sluggard voluptuaries, the end of the wretched hemerocœte, and think, while you may, what will be your own!'

CHAPTER IX.

MULLIDÆ, OR MULLETS.

Ἐν σαπρῷ γάρῳ βάπτοντες ἀποπνίξουσί με.

Plato, Comic. ap. Ath.

May I sit heavy on thy chest to-night!
I, that was wash'd to death in fulsome wine,
Poor Mullet, by thy guile betray'd to death.
May gasping, pulseless dreams thy soul weigh down,
Apicius! and in night-mare think on me.

OUR purpose being to tattle about such ancient fish as are probably familiar to the reader's eye and ear, we pass over, as not occurring in the Mediterranean, nor included in Pliny's ancient catalogue, the two remaining groups of Percidæ:—1st, the Polynemi (one species of which, P. paradiseus, is highly esteemed by Indian nabobs; and 2ndly, the long-bodied Sphyrenas, (a group distinguished by their projecting under-jaws, and containing an individual, the Sphyr. Barracuda,* which is no less terrible than the white shark,) and come at once to the subjects of our present chapter, the Mullidæ. Mullets are unlike perches in many important particulars, such as having barbels dependent from the lower jaw, small, closed mouths, and loose, large scales, which come off almost as easily as those from a butterfly's wing; they offer no less striking differences with the succeeding group of gurnards, or modern triglias: naturalists have therefore very properly agreed to place them apart in most recent ichthyological arrangements. Two fish monopolize the whole of this small subdivision

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* Nobis.

—viz. M. surmuletus, our English red mullet, well characterized by a series of longitudinal yellow bands traversing the sides of the body; and M. barbatus, so called, like one of the Scipios, from the length of its (fishy) beard. The last-named individual is very much, but not entirely, as Pliny supposed, confined to southern seas; and though exceeded by the first in size, greatly surpasses it in flavour. Both species being *red*, have received from the French, in common with the gurnards, and for the same reason, the trivial name *rougets*: while, to distinguish them generically, *barbets* is added to designate mullets, and *grondins*, gurnards.

The origin of the old Latin word *mullus* is certainly obscure, and Pliny's and Fenestella's interpretation of it—viz. *mullus a mulleo*—evidently incorrect. The mulleus, as we read, was a kind of red dress-slipper—the *rococo* predecessor of *soleas* and *gallicas*, which, if not manufactured by Trojan shoemakers, and introduced by Æneas into Italy, was at any rate as old as the Alban kings, by whom it continued to be worn till, that dynasty being upset, the victorious Romans, not content with figuratively 'casting out their own shoe' over the vanquished land, actually got into the enemy's slippers, and so trod them both down at heel! The improbability of an etymology which assumes a fish to be called after a shoe, for no better reason than that each is *red*, and that the names severally designating them are not dissimilar in sound, is sufficiently obvious; especially when such a 'hunt-the-slipper' derivation unavoidably sends the mullet to fish for a name anterior to the date of these Alban *brodequins;* what, then, might it have been when the Pelliti Patres of Rome ate it barefoot, or were differently shod? Conceding that the origin of the word is as cloudy and obscure as that of the people who imposed it, if we must yet trace it to some source, why not rather to *mollis* than mulleus? for, besides that the

derivation itself seems easier and less forced, that adjective moreover points out a leading peculiarity of the mullet—namely, an extreme softness of skin, sufficiently evidenced by the extravasation which ensues, and the facility with which the scales come off on the least pressure. As to the meaning of the Greek word *triglia*, that, if we subscribe to Oppian's etymology, admits of no doubt:

> The triglia, named from breeding thrice a year;*

but Athenæus, who affirms that this species only breeds three times, and after the third parturition has the womb destroyed by worms, thinks the name is given in allusion to this periodic mishap. A singular circumstance about this latter synonym is, that it not only obtains at present in modern Greece (where indeed, if anywhere, we might expect to find it), but has also entirely supplanted the old Latin word in Italy; so that no one now ever hears 'Mugli! mugli!' hawked about the streets of Rome or Naples; but the constant cry is 'Trigle vive! trigle!'

The inordinate love for these same *trigle*, in the city and times of the Cæsars, would surpass belief, if much contemporary evidence did not lay an historical bar in the way of any rational scepticism on the subject. *Mullomania*, though undescribed as a disease by Roman physicians, was a mental malady well known and deplored by Roman moralists, which, invading the grown-up children of the higher ranks, seems to have been as rife and catching among them as modern measles or small-pox. All Rome's great men and mighty men, and councillors of state; all her citizens of trust, taste, and *ton*: prince, premier, and philosopher, poet, painter, and pimp, parasite, parvenu, and purveyor, were, with the *rel-duo rel-nemo* exception, confirmed *mullomaniacs;* and

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* Τρίγλαι δὲ τριγόνοισιν ἐπώνυμοί εἰσι γονῇσι.—*Halieut.*

but that, happily for Rome, this fish was costly, and that

Non mangia la triglia
Colui che la piglia,

so that

Men their throats of mullet must amerce,*
Who'd scarce a gudgeon lingering in their purse,

the whole population might have been prescribed helle-bore, and shipped off to Anticyra with advantage.†

To buy and rear mullet was, with many, the 'fixed idea'—the settled business and ruling passion of life: those whose purses were long enough, drained them to maintain vivariums; and not only cash, but time too, was profusely lavished upon this one object: quite betimes, and long before office or 'change hours (no luckless lover or expectant heir more eager for the peep of day than he) the mullet-millionaire was at the pond ere the stars were extinguished, feeding or caressing his fish. It took time, skill, and patience to teach creatures so ob-tuse to heed the voice that called or the hand that fondled and fed them; but to warm such cold-blooded animals as these into a reciprocity of regard, was a work of yet greater difficulty, and the prime 'labour of love;' and that it might not be 'lost,' this

Man of pleasure was a man of pains,‡

who would toil, sweat, and hang all day over his stews; manipulate in turn every member of the mute com-munity, and seek, with the assiduity and zeal of an in-ceptor M.P., to ingratiate himself with his scaly con-stituents. Educational responsibilities (of which some

* Juvenal.

† Hellebore was the Roman remedy for madness, and as the best grew at Anticyra, patients were sent there that they might eat it fresh.

‡ Young.

make so light) he thoroughly appreciated, and knew practically, alike its difficulties and details; with him it was a joint affair of honour and conscience not to allow any neighbour's mullet to become more accomplished than his own; and thus with heart and soul, intellect and reputation entirely devoted to this one object, the work of tuition prospered in his hands ('quid non facit amor!') and was attended with surprising results: the 'Red Rovers' of the fish-pond would at length know and acknowledge their master; at his whistle flock emulously together, at his sight leap joyously into the air; and as he plunged his arm into the agitated basin, each individual of the serried shoal strove who should first present fins, and rub scales against the well-known fingers! With only one coadjutor, a trusty and very *dear* functionary—his nomenclator—whose particular office it was to assign and teach each finny favourite its distinctive appellation, the devoted master would divide the glory of these *trigla-paidentic* exhibitions, to witness which (near Naples) full half the city sometimes poured out to Bauli, and there beheld, in wide-mouthed wonder—

> Each well-train'd pupil answering to the roll,
> Approach the 'namester,' and receive his dole.*

Nor did their lord's arduous duties close with the review; as dinner drew near, other cares, in which mullet still occupied the first place, demanded prompt attention and settlement: well-dressed guests expected well-dressed fish; and thus a culinary consultation, long as Domitian's with his privy councillors on the same subject, would ensue with the cook, as to how his favourites should be served; and by the time that important point was adjusted, the hungry guests, with hospitality tickets,† the

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* Martial.

† Tesseræ hospitales.

vouchers of their right to be there, arrived; when the host must welcome and assign to all their places; and as the different triclinums filled with lolling friends, then, nor before, must issue the crowning order of the day, to 'bring in the mullet'—not dead and swimming in sauce—but alive, and swimming* in a capacious globe of glass, to be handed round to the buzzing crowd, the theme of rapturous eulogy from every tongue; till hunger restraining further curiosity, the fish were slowly put to death in 'fulsome' sauce; nor till the last struggle was over were they removed for awhile, preparatory to a second *entrée* on a 'lordly dish,' now done to a turn, again to become the theme of conversation, and not unfrequently a subject of contention.

The last scene of the mullet's sufferings, whether left to die *à sec*, or drowned in 'allies' sauce'—*garum sociorum*—and the barbarity of the master and guests who could sit coolly by and witness them, have called forth some energetic expressions of sympathy for the fish, and of execration for the company, in two singular declamatory passages from a Roman and a Parisian philosopher, from which we hope it may be safe to express modified dissent, without passing for an approver either of cruelty or gluttony. We print the Latin diatribe below,† but

* If such tricks were played with fish then, as Antonio, our Neapolitan cook, assured us are now practised at Naples, it was certainly well to be in at the death. He told us, on our objecting to a dish of stinking mullet, which he would have persuaded us were just out of the water, that that man was an *ignoramore* who had misinformed our excellency that red gills proved *triglia* to be fresh; since the dealers were notoriously in the habit of painting these parts red, and of varnishing the whole fish to look bright, on purpose to cheat Englishmen. If his information was correct, 'Nimium ne crede colori' would be no inappropriate inscription to put up over the portico of the Neapolitan fish-market.

† 'Quanto crudeliora sunt opera luxuriæ! quoties naturam aut

cannot help thinking that the language in which Seneca animadverts on these entertainments, might have been transferred with more telling propriety to the bloody butcheries of the Coliseum, where red *men*, and not red mullet, were the victims of the entertainment. Neither does it strike us as at all surprising, that those who could not only endure but enjoy the thrilling sights and sounds there presented, of fellow-creatures and wild beasts gashed and gored and struggling in every stage of suffering, should watch with something like philosophic complacency the flagging pulses and quiet deportment of a moribund mullet, even by way of relief to so much strong and fierce excitement. The Latin moralist indeed states, as an aggravating circumstance attending these ichthyophagian banquets, that 'funerals' were not properly 'furnished' in consequence, and that friends and relatives were continually left and forsaken on the bed of death, when their parting hours interfered with an invitation to one of these feasts; nay, he would have us believe that such orgies tended to extinguish the last sparks of patriotism in the breast, and to drown

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mentitur, aut vincit! . . . Ad hunc fastum pervenere ventres delicatorum, ut gustare non possent piscem, nisi quem in ipso convivio natantem palpitantemque viderint. Audiebamus nihil esse melius saxatili Mullo: at nunc audimus nihil est moriente formosius. Da mihi in manus vas vitreum, in quo exultet, in quo trepidet; ubi multum diuque laudatus in illo perlucido vivario extrahitur, tunc ut quisque peritior est, monstrat. Vide quomodo exarserit rubor omni acrior minio. Vide quas per latera venas agat. Ecce sanguinem putes ventrem, quam lucidum quidiam caeruleumque sub ipso tempore effulsit. Jam porrigitur et pallet, et in unum colorem componitur. Ex his nemo *morienti amico assidet*: nemo videre mortem patris sui sustinet, quam optavit. *Quotusquisque funus domesticum ad rogum prosequitur?* Fratrum propinquorumque extrema hora deseritur; ad mortem Mulli concurritur,' etc.—*Quest. Nat.* c. 17.

all family affection in the 'anchovy' that smothered the fish!

> Ce Senèque, Monsieur, était excellent homme;
> Etait-il de Paris?

asks a valet of his master, a ruined gambler, to whom he has been reading Seneca's Moral Philosophy, by way of consoling him for his losses.

> Non,

is *le joueur's* reply,

> Il était de Rome;

which reminds us of our other 'excellent homme,' citoyen Lacépède, who has also penned some virtuous republican sentiments in the service of these same red mullet. There are few things out of the 'Sentimental Journey' more eminently sentimental than the following passage, which we quote in the original French, for what other language could do justice to it?—'Avec quelle magnificence la nature n'a-t-elle pas décoré ce poisson! de quelles réflexions, de quels mouvements, de quelles images, son histoire n'a-t-elle pas enrichi la morale, l'éloquence, et la poésie! La beauté a été l'origine de la captivité de ces mulles: elle a donc été pour eux, comme pour tant d'autres êtres, d'un intérét bien plus vif, une cause de contrainte, de gêne, et de malheur; mais elle leur a été bien plus funeste encore, par un effet bien éloigné de ceux qu'elle fait naître ordinairement; elle leur a condamné à toutes les angoisses d'une mort longue et douloureuse; elle a produit dans l'âme de leur possesseurs une cruauté d'autant plus révoltante qu'elle était froide et vaine.' Lacépède then proceeds to speak in detail of these fish orgies, in the same strain which Seneca had done; and having finally exhibited to his readers in a very graphic manner a martyr mullet, passing from bright scarlet through every succeeding hue, till the pallor of death steals on, continues quite as

pathetically as Sterne describing Le Fevre's death, thus: 'Des mouvements convulsifs marquent seuls l'approche de la fin du rouget; aucun son, aucun cri plaintif n'annoncent ni la vivacité de ses douleurs ni la mort qui va les faire cesser. Les mulles sont muets comme les autres poissons, et nous aimons à croire, pour l'honneur de l'espèce humaine, que ces Romains, malgré leur avidité pour de nouvelles jouissances, qui échappaient sans cesse à leur sens émoussées par l'excès des plaisirs, n'auraient pu résister à la plainte la plus faible de leur malheureuse victime.'

What! citizen Lacépède! you, whose book was printed in the red-letter days of French republicanism—only six years from the inauguration of that Paris Pandemonium—the Reign of Terror; before Robespierre's carcase was yet consumed by worms, and while his spectre still haunted the slumbers of the bereaved; when the cries of woe from noyades and fusillades, though ceased in the air, had left their long echo on the startled ear, which seemed to hear them still; when the choked-up waters of the Loire had hardly disembogued their unnatural load into the ensanguined sea; when the guillotine had scarce ceased to reap its horrid harvest, gutters begun to run limpid again, and pavements to recover from their foul stains,—in the teeth and vivid recollection of all this, can you, scarce escaped yourself from the desolating carnage, denounce Apicius as a 'mullet murderer' (assassin des mulles), and then, in pathos and bathos surpassing even a Georges Sand or a Eugène Sue, wind up with a hope, for the honour of humanity, that could this pretty little fish have found a tongue, these Roman assassins would have spared his life, unable to resist 'la plainte la plus faible de leur malheureuse victime!' Bah, citizen Lacépède! This is, however, but a specimen of that French sentimentality so well apprehended and finely ridiculed by Canning:

Which metes in nicest scales its feelings strong,
False by degrees, and exquisitely wrong:
For the crush'd beetle *first;* the widow'd dove,
And all the warbled sorrows of the grove;
Next for poor suffering guilt; and *last* of all
For parents, friends, a king's and country's fall.

But what will the reader suppose to be the assigned source of all this Roman degeneracy so ably depicted and so feelingly deplored by Lacépède? Rome had ceased to be a republic! 'De Rome républicaine il ne restait que le nom; toute idée libérale avait disparu; la servitude avait brisé tous les ressorts de l'âme; les sentimens généreux s'étaient éteints; la vertu, qui est la force de l'âme, n'existait plus; le goût, qui ne consiste que dans la perception délicate des convenances, que la tyrannie abhorre, chaque jour se dépravait. Les arts, qui ne prospèrent que par l'élévation de la pensée, la pureté du goût, la chaleur du sentiment, éteignaient leur flambeaux; la science ne convenait pas aux esclaves, dont elle ne pouvait éclairer que les fers. Des joies fausses, mais bruyantes, et qui étourdissent; des plaisirs grossiers qui enivrent; jouissances sensuelles qui amènent tout oubli du passé, toute considération du présent, toute crainte de l'avenir; des représentations vaines de ces trésors trompeurs entassées à la place des vrais biens que l'on avait perdus, plusieurs recherches barbares, tristes symptômes de la férocité, dernier terme d'un courage abâtardi, devaient donc convenir à des Romains avilis, à des citoyens dégradés, à des hommes abrutis.'

Revenons à nos mulles!

As at least half the evils of the state were imputed to mullet entertainments, we need not wonder that the mention of this fish should be so frequent. Indeed, to believe all contemporary authors have stated, would lead to the conclusion that never was a good thing turned to worse account: whatever wrongs men planned or prac-

tised against their neighbour, whether to delude a mistress, to bribe justice, to pervert a conscience, to flatter pride, to secure a legacy, or to supplant an heir, mullet was the medium by which these several infractions of the Decalogue were effected, and the whole social duties of man upset. Sometimes, with no further motive than that of mere gluttony, enormous sums were, as we read, squandered on this fish:

> Not long ago, it seems, as tatlers tell,
> Who ever love the marvellous to swell,
> A mullet tempts him, and the glutton pays
> For every single pound the mullet weighs
> A round sestertium, and those pounds were six.
> Well, he design'd, no doubt, some fool to fix,
> Whose palsied hand his fluctuating will
> Indites and cancels; I commend his skill.
> Money's well spent on dolts with cash to leave,
> Nor wit to question wherefore they receive.
> He dreamt of no such thing; without disguise
> Crispinus simply for Crispinus buys.
> Man of the Nile! What, thou, Crispinus, thou!
> An act like this before all Rome avow.
> What! for some shining scales, a sum devote
> More than would buy nets, fishermen, and boat,—
> For which some roods of ground the province sells,
> Or a whole sheep-walk in Apulia's dells?*

Though this fish was more often used to point a moral, it might however occasionally also help to 'adorn a tale.' As the poet Philoxenus* was dining with king Dionysius of Syracuse, two mullets were placed, by order of the royal entertainer, before him and his guest; and it so chanced (?) that the larger did not find its way to Philoxenus; whereupon the poet, taking the fish demurely off his plate, leant over it with an air of serious attention. Dionysius, whose eye seems to have been as sharp as his well-known ear, immediately fixing the

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* Badham's Juvenal. † Plutarch.

poet, demanded what he was about; on which, after carefully replacing the fish on his plate, the poet replied, that being just then engaged in collecting materials for his tale of 'Galatea,'* he was anxious to make a right use of the monarch's bounty in placing such a luxury before him, by asking the little mullet a few questions touching Nereus, the heroine's father; but he continued, my informant is unsatisfactory: mullet of such very diminutive dimensions, he says, are not presented at the sea-king's court, and so my tiny friend can only suggest that, if I want information, I should apply to his elder brother, lying there before your majesty, who, as he tells me, is fully competent to furnish it. Dionysius enjoying the joke more than the fish, sent the bigger specimen to his facetious guest.

Martial shows such a predilection for triglia that his pages seem to smell fishy, and the frequency of their introduction into his writings seems to point them out as essential to 'Epigram' as the wolf or eagle are to 'Fable.' Most of these epigrammatic *jeux d'esprit* are by no means very piquant even in the original, and become, of course, more flat in an off-hand English version (though they deserve nothing more elaborate); our object however being merely to show, by a few citations, the strange craving of the S.P.Q.R. for this particular dish, we subjoin one or two specimens, leaving the others to be inferred:—

I.

Lampas, when he's gorged and swill'd,
Till his paunch is over-fill'd,

* To understand this allusion to Galatea, the reader may be reminded that Dionysius had cast his dithyrambic friend into prison for the seduction of a favourite singer. During his captivity, like Tasso, he wrote poetry, and composed an allegorical piece called 'Cyclops,' in which he delineated his royal incarcerator under the name of Polyphemus, and his mistress as 'Galatea.' The poem procured him his liberty, and the mullet.

Still contrives within his gullet
To keep a corner for a *mullet*.

II.

To listen to thy vapid wit,
Drawl'd out in pompous strains,
I would not be condemn'd to sit,
Although a *mullet* crown'd my pains.

III.

Of *mullets fine* and costly wine,
Sad A—— bewails the treat:
His sulph'rous phiz gay neighbours quiz,
And two podagric feet!

When it was found that the Roman territory could no longer furnish this luxury in sufficient quantity to meet the perpetually increasing demand, large supplies for stocking new ponds and replenishing the markets were imported from great distances. Juvenal mentions two well-known emporiums for these delicacies—Napoleon and Fieschi's Isle, and Taormini, in Sicily.

A mullet enters next, to Virro brought,
At T'ormini for him expressly caught,
Or Corsica: for now our nets must seek
Far distant shores, and scour each foreign creek
Our empty marts no native mullets know,
Your gluttons suffer not the fish to grow;
And lenas* must from coasts remote obtain
Gifts to Aurelia sent, to sell again.

Other localities also were scarcely less run upon. Pollux mentions Ionia; Ætius, Syracuse and Gibraltar; Varrinus, Magnesia; Archestratus, the Campanian coast. In more modern times, Perotti has celebrated those of the Tyrrhine sea between Tarquinii and Corniculum, where they acquire, he says, a brighter hue than elsewhere; but Jovius declares loudly in favour of the neighbourhood of Rome itself, where the specimens,

* Fortune-hunters.

'though smaller, are better flavoured than anywhere else in Italy.' Those of the islands of Malta and Crete have long been famous. Connoisseurs pronounce the small mullet of the Propontis, Bosphorus, and Black Sea the best flavoured; and Sonnini's experience goes to show that M. barbatus of Alexandria need not fear a comparison with the most highly prized from any other site.

The good or bad quality of this, more than of most fish, depends upon locality. Omnivorous, like men, mullet differ from the generality of mankind in preferring stinking things to fresh. According to Oppian, their favourite *bonne bouche* is some wave-tossed carcase, sodden with water, and distended with mephitic gases; and it is known that they seldom bite freely, unless angled for with a fetid paste. Galen, aware of their nasty propensities, wisely recommends a careful inspection of the body before cooking, and should the inside not stand the scrutiny, that the favourite part, the trail, should in that case be rejected, as unfit for the table. Pliny also confirms what Galen has said of the advisableness of looking and smelling before venturing to cook or taste a mullet, and he gives the particular name of *lutarius* (mud-fish) to those individuals the flavour and wholesomeness of which have been tampered with by their grubbing in ooze and fattening on filth.*

Epicures eagerly sought for the largest specimens that could be procured, and would pay any price for them. Horace supposes this mere caprice, and asks,—

> Of carps and *mullet* why prefer the great,
> Though cut in pieces ere my lord can eat,
> Yet for small turbot such regard profess?
> Because God made this large, the other less.
>
> *Pope's Imitation.*

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* Sonnini informs us that an excellent mode of transporting this fish to a distance, is to remove the inside, and boil it care-

But Jovius refers it more properly to gluttony, and says that the large were more desirable than small, on account of the increased size of the head and liver, which were considered the prime parts of the fish. Galen once asked a friend, and perhaps a patient, suffering under the mullet malady, 'sulphureusque color carnificesque pedes,' what particular reasons he had for paying so high a price for trigla; the head, his informant told him, was one good reason, and the liver a second. Heliogabalus, more nice than wise, carried his extravagance so far as to eat the barbels only, and to throw away the rest, both of the head and body.

The modes of dressing so approved a fish were endless. One way was to alecize or halecize it.

'Apicius,' says Pliny, 'not content with the invention of a garum to drown this fish in, went about to provoke men to devise a certain broth, made from it, like that sauce called *alec*, which cometh of fishes when they corrupt.' Mullets are too hard to take salt well, but make an excellent souse; the modern Venetians prepare it in this manner, keeping the flesh soaking some time in a pickle of capsicum vinegar, before preparing it for the table.

The usual weight of mullet is from one to two pounds; Martial and Pliny speak of the latter weight as not uncommon; Horace and Seneca record some much heavier specimens. Juvenal, as we have seen above, even mentions one of six pounds, which last however is probably poetical, not avoirdupois, weight,—a species of license in which, when

Poussant jusqu'au bout la mordante hyperbole,

he occasionally indulges. Pliny invokes one Licinius

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fully in sea-water, and finally to dust it well with flour, which excludes the air and keeps it fresh—the raw fish will not travel far.

Martianus (a Mrs. Harris of his) to corroborate the capture of a mullet from the Red Sea weighing *eighty pounds!*

Representations of mullet occur in the frescoes and mosaics at Pompeii, and the fish itself is found occasionally in a fossil state.

CHAPTER X.

THE GURNARD GROUP.

Resplendissantes dans leurs tégumens, brillantes dans leur parure, rapides dans leur natation, agiles dans leur vol, vivant ensemble sans se combattre, pouvant s'aider sans se nuire, on croirait devoir les comprendre parmi les êtres sur lesquels la nature a répandu le plus des faveurs.—*Lacépède.*

THE small group of mullets (presenting, with some striking peculiarities of their own, many points of resemblance with the perches) are placed, as we have seen, at the end of the great division of acanthopterygii, or fish with spinous back fins. The succeeding group, characterized by sharp projecting cheeks, and cuboid heads cased in cuirasses of bony plates, includes the gurnard (trigla*); the flying fish (dactylopterus); the sea-scorpion (scorpæna); cottus, represented on our shores by the father-lasher and the miller's thumb,† and those most

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* This, which is the old original Greek name for mullet, was later made by Artedi to include the gurnards as well: on a subsequent revision the two have been again dissociated, the mullets robbed of their rights, and the gurnards put into possession of a name which does not properly belong to them.

† The C. gobio, or miller's thumb, tête d'âne of some of the provinces of France; the κόττος of Aristotle, of which he gives, in the 8th chapter of his 4th book on Animals, the following excellent notice: *Ἔτι δ'ἐν τοῖς ποταμοῖς εἰσὶν ἰχθύδια ὑπο ταῖς πέτραις, ἃ καλοῦσί τινες κόττους· καὶ ταῦτα θηρεύουσι, κόπτοντες τὰς πέτρας λίθοις· τὰ δὲ ἐκπίπτει παραφερόμενα, ὡς ἀκούοντα καὶ καρηβαροῦντα ἱπὸ τοῦ ψόφου.* The flesh of this species becomes salmon-coloured by boiling, and is held a delicacy; those of the lake Neufchâtel (where as a schoolboy we made an early acquaintance with them)

pugnacious of small fish the gasterostei or sticklebacks, species of all which genera were known to the ancients, while of many exotic and some indigenous subgenera we find no certain accounts in their writings. Amongst the more remarkable of these last may be cited the sebastes, from whose prickly back the Esquimaux derive their primitive needles, the 'not to be trusted apistos,'* the peristidions, one of which, P. cataphracta, is occasionally sold at Naples under the vernacular name of 'pesce cornutu,' and those rival frights and bugbears the crushed head pelors and synaceans, 'que leur affreuse laideur a fait regarder comme vénéneuses par les pêcheurs des mers des Indes.'† Leaving these and others, which are chiefly interesting to the ichthyologists or to the inhabitants of those shores where they occur, we proceed to a brief notice of the Gurnard group.

Few fish have been so long notorious for making a noise in the world as the triglas; the Romans used to call them lyres, but whether this name was ironically imposed on account of their most unmusical grunt, or in consequence of some resemblance of their body to the shape of an ancient lyre, seems not quite clearly made out: a much more modern designation for the gurnard

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are particularly fine. The second species of cottus is that bold voracious fish the C. scorpius, or father-lasher, of whose flesh little use is made except by the Greenlanders, who also extract oil from ts liver.

* One of these, Apistos Israelitorum, being the only known flying-fish of the Red Sea, where it is called by the Arabs the sea-locust, is supposed by Ehrenberg, who fell in with it at Tor, to represent the quails on which the Israelites were miraculously fed in the desert, as if a miracle needed explanation.

† Cuvier. 'The negroes of the Isle of France, who regard it rather as a reptile than a fish, and fear its sting worse than that of a viper or scorpion, call it fi-fi (the hideous); in fact, nothing can be imagined more frightful—one would scarcely call it a fish, but rather a loose mass, an unformed lump of corrupted jelly.'

is that of 'cuckoo,' the correctness of which name is sanctioned by science, 'T. cuculus' being the printed label affixed to bottled specimens of the red gurnard; but the French word *grondin* is, we opine (due deference being paid to the ear), a much better onomatopœia than cuckoo. Both the cuckoo or small red, and the larger sapphirine gurnard (T. hirundo), are common at market, and not to be despised at table: they seem always to have enjoyed a fair, though never a splendid reputation; 'neque omnino plebeiæ neque etiam nobilioribus comparandæ,' as we have somewhere seen them described by a connoisseur whose Latin in free translation may be rendered 'a good family, but not a company fish.' Hippocrates, by permitting a restricted use of the flesh to invalids, gives by implication an opinion favourable to its wholesomeness and digestibility; the fibre, however, being over-firm, and requiring a good gastric juice to dissolve and chemify it properly, no discreet modern physician would care to incur the responsibility of recommending gurnards to delicate invalids, with so many better substitutes in the market. Those who dine without doctor's counsel often eat these fish stuffed and served in a rich gravy sauce: the most approved mode, however, and that practised from the very earliest down to the present period, has been to marinate—*i. e.* first to

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'Totum corpus,' says Commerson, 'muco squalidum est et ulcerosum.' Its head and limbs are enveloped as it were in a sack; a thick skin, soft, spongy, altogether wrinkled and verrucose like that of a leper, variegated without any order by little clouds of whitish, grey, brown, and divers other tints. Sometimes it is almost black, and is always gluey and disagreeable to the touch; two small eyes are almost lost in the deep-sunk sockets of a huge cavernous head. The dorsal appendages constitute a series of small tubercles rather than a fin properly so called; the broad and short pectorals appear intended to surround the neck like a frill, rather than to serve as organs of natation; like most ill-favoured things, its tenacity to life is great.

fry, and then souse them in vinegar or other sour sauce. Epicharmus and Dorion describe the process in Athenæus, thus: 'Score the fish across the back, fry in oil, with a seasoning of salt, chopped rue, and grated cheese, and serve, soused in vinegar.' A nearly similar mode of dressing gurnard is still had recourse to in France and Italy; but sometimes, in place of frying, our Gallic neighbours boil the fish in wine and sorrel-water, and then plunge it into vinegar well aromatized with saffron, pepper, salt, and other condiments. A line from the 'immortal bard' shows that the dish of Epicharmus, the 'cuocciù marinato' of Naples, was trite to a proverb (and so, it is to be presumed, generally approved of) as far back as, and probably long before, the days of Queen Elizabeth: 'If I be not a soused gurnard,' says Sir John Falstaff, 'I'm ashamed of my men!' We must, however, leave the soused, to say a few words about the dactylopterus volitans, or flying gurnard.

The ancients were well acquainted with this and some other acronautic species; Oppian mentions no less than three; characterized, *inter alia*, by greater or less aerotomic powers of fin. 'The swallow's flight,' he tells us, 'is low and short, the irexes scarcely rise above the water (*σχεδὸν ἀερέθονται*), but advance, alternately beating and skimming the surface of the waves; the theutis alone takes a long flight.' Authors differ considerably as to the maximum height attained by these volatile fish: in many instances, as intimated by the Greek poet above cited,

> 'Tis only a bounce, as though they were trying
> By bounding and skipping to teach themselves flying;

others of them take long flying leaps, and then subside slowly on the parachute of their pectoral fins. The dactylopterus volitans (and not volans, for even his progress is but a series of short, fitful flights, not one sustained

effort) can tower, Sir F. Herbert says, forty feet: this is probably above the mark; Gillius says, from six to eight feet, which is certainly below it; and various other writers assign intermediate altitudes; but all are agreed that these creatures, to whatever height their powers of propulsion may succeed in first carrying them, can remain on the wing but for a very brief period. During this short exodus from the deep, whilst the membrane of their fins remains moist and supple, few spectacles in natural history are more interesting for the eye to follow than the evolutions of a scared flight of these dactylopteri, rising, as by magic, out of the waves, and winging its wide-spread way like an immense flock of birds over the deep. So fearful are they of surprise, that a shoal has been known to emerge suddenly on the mere splash of a pebble thrown into the water; generally, however, it is the pursuit of some hungry bonetus through the liquid plain that rouses their most strenuous efforts; and as there is no cover to hide in, the sole chance of escape depends on the speed they may employ, and on the impossibility of the bloodthirsty Polyphemus, however hungry he may be, gorging the whole phalanx. We attempt their flight in verse:

When keen-eyed triglas see the darkening foe,
They shoot like meteors from the depths below;
Troop to the top, uncurl their stiffen'd tails,
And lash the refluent surge with foaming flails!
Upborne awhile, on vigorous pinions fly,
And the grim pursuivant, elate, defy;
Till, warn'd by flagging powers and aching breast,
The panting quarry dips, in hope to rest.
Delusive hope! scared as they touch the main,
The rushing monster scatters them again!
And now succeeds a fluttering, broken flight:
They rise to droop, ascend to re-alight;
Hard-press'd, now skim along the watery waste,
O'er many a liquid rood in rueful haste,

Beat with long fins the agitated spray,
Too weak for flight, and flap their noisy way;
Till gasping, faint, and litter'd o'er the brine,
They drop into their tomb, and make no sign.

Moore has written some lines on the flying-fish, which, though doubtless familiar to most readers, are too pretty not to quote.

When I have seen thy snowy wing
O'er the blue wave at evening spring,
And give those scales of silvery white
So gaily to the eye of light,
(As if thy frame were form'd to rise
And live amid the glorious skies ;)
Oh ! it has made me proudly feel
How like thy wings' impatient zeal
Is the pure soul that scorns to rest
Upon the world's ignoble breast,
But spreads the plume that God has given,
And rises into light and heaven.

But when I see that wing so bright
Grow languid with a moment's flight,
Attempt the paths of air in vain,
And sink into the waves again,
Alas, the flatterer's pride is o'er :
Like that awhile the soul may soar,
But erring men must blush to think,
Like thee again, the soul may sink.

Oh, virtue, when thy clime I seek,
Let not my spirit's flight be weak ;
Let me not, like this feeble thing,
That spreads awhile its splendid wing,
Just sparkle 'mid the solar glow,
And plunge again to depths below ;
But when I leave the grosser throng
With whom my soul hath dwelt so long,
Let me in that aspiring day
Cast every lingering stain away,
And panting for thy purer air,
Fly up at once and fix me there.

Would we could hit off, à la Sneyder, in a pen-and-ink sketch, a true life portrait of this striking fish, re-exhibiting him to the reader, as we have ourself seen him in his glory, fat and well-favoured, with sleek sides lustrous from the sheen of new-burnished scales; now gliding in swan-like dignity through the rippling lymph, with the composed nonchalance of a favourite who has nothing to fear; and now, as whim or a love of display seized him, bounding with a sudden, loud, echoing plash, several feet out of the water, suddenly to furl his wide-spread fans, and plunge, like a falling star, to the bottom. Conscious, however, of possessing no such Dutch artistic capability, we shall not even attempt a likeness we must needs fail in, but proceed instead to sketch the place of an introduction, chronicled with much complacency in an old Naples note-book, of which 'ne sit nefas' to say that, of the many ceremonials of the sort with other 'distinguished foreigners,' implied in a seven years' continuous residence in the south, few indeed either made so pleasing an impression at the time, or have since afforded so agreeable a retrospect as this, to our buoyant and lively, though, we must admit, rather bouncing and volatile acquaintance — the flying gurnard.

Somewhere about a mile out of Naples, on the Baian side of the bay, halfway up that broiling and dusty, but beautiful and quite descriptionless road, the Strada Nuova, with its *κισσήρεις ὄχθαι χλωρά τ' ἀκτὰ πολυστάφυλος*; above where the last faint fremitus of sound rises from the gurgling rocks; where the 'nauticum keleusma' of the port, and the deafening discords of the Chiaja, harmonized by distance, and blended by bland zephyrs, fall in softest symphony on the lulled listening ear, peacefully and unjarringly as the wave-borne whisper or the buzz from a reposing hive, stand the high-perched villa and precipitous vineyards of the Mar-

chese A——, an eccentric octogenarian, who having, in imitation of Lucullus, opened a communication many years ago at the bottom of his lava domains, between an extensive cavern and the neighbouring bay, converted the admitted waters into an extensive vivarium for sea-fish, and formed of the capacious sides an aviary for web-footed fowls, and a prison for wild lawless birds. It was not till after some frequentation of the fish-market, nor till our eye had become familiarized with the dead forms of most of the scaly beauties of the bay, that Professor C—— mentioned this interesting spot, and offered at the same time to make us acquainted with its treasures, and the old nobleman (himself a treasure!) to whom it belonged. Thanking him on the spot for his obliging offer, we were in a very few minutes possessed of a queer-shaped, oddly-folded, very flattering note, in which thanks were tendered to the Marchese by anticipation (anticipatamente) for the civilities required of him, and ourself mentioned in a way superlatively to our credit and advantage. Armed with this missive, we started in hot haste, in the very middle of an Italian dog-day, and after some time arrived, staggering under the suffocating heat of a walk which nothing but a strong sense of duty, or an equally strong desire to study flying-fish alive, could have brought to a successful issue, at the gate of the old ichthyophilist. On pulling a fiery bell-wire, the glowing portals opened, and entering from the baked lava road, we proceeded forthwith to make inquiries for the Marchese, of his 'donna di casa.' The punctual old man had, we found, already started, it being just on the point of the 'venti due' (twenty-two o'clock), the hour, she said, when he constantly went with Giuseppe to feed the 'creature' in the cavern.

We followed the twain in breathless speed; and, not to be baulked of our object at last, after such a walk,

ran rapidly to seaward down a long series of hanging terraces, communicating by short flights of abrupt ladder-y steps; and after a descent which, like that of the well-known neighbouring Avernus, was too facile by half —as the ascent had been slow and toilsome—found ourself in a very few minutes at the base of the last rudimentary scalinata, and within a salmon-leap only of the bay which was bubbling right under our feet. Following the instructions received from the 'donna di casa,' we turned abruptly to the right, saw a cleft some few paces off, entered it, and in one minute more emerged suddenly into a gigantic and resounding cavern, deliciously cool, and no less grateful in its obscurity to the aching eye-balls and dizzy brain, than it was refreshing to the parched and fevered surface of the body. It would be quite easy, by an accumulation of well-culled adjectives, to express our pleasurable sensations and surprise on first entering this imposing interior, but none we could either find or forge, would probably convey to others any well-defined notion of the peculiar characteristics of this cave. What, however, no dictionary of terms, though ever so well conned and considered, could possibly effect in the reproduction of the marvellous hall to the reader's eye, one single epithet describes so thoroughly, that, after it, all others may be safely dismissed as incommensurate, or omitted as wholly superfluous; it was, in a word, a Virgilian cave! Virgilian in all its accessories; and so lively were the first impressions it conveyed to our senses, and the feelings and associations which these in turn conjured up, that, as vision began to return, and the eye to accommodate itself to distant objects, we half expected to see Dido and the 'pious Æneas' sitting clandestinely in the cool twilight: haply to surprise the great Queen of Carthage sighing behind one of its retired nooks, or to hear the soft thrilling sonorous hexameters of that gay deceiver, the plausible hero of Troy, rising in deep

clear tenor to the dome, and telling the honeyed lie of his unmeasured devotion in sweetly measured, and oh how seductive strains!

We actually saw and heard nothing of the sort: if there at all, both were on their guard, suppressed all outward expression of their feelings, whispered not, drew in their breath, and sate mute, as we passed near.

Conticuere . . . intentique ora tenebant.

The first two figures that met our recovered powers of sight were those of the old Marquis and of his fidus fish-Achates, Giuseppe, who stood with the provision-basket yet unopened, and a long perch, resting for the nonce against the rocky walls. An occasional keen, shrill cry, and a fitful rustling of feathers above, soon invited our eye to the scabrous sites whence they issued; and there we beheld, *mirabile visu*, a lofty dome, arching high overhead, bristling with immmerable rows of pendent and pointed stalactites, looking as might have looked the gaping palate of some vast antediluvian squalus, and seeming to threaten instant and easy destruction to the three pigmy intruders who had thus improvidently trusted themselves on the wrong side of its portentous rictus. On delivering Professor C.'s note, we were made not 'padroni' (masters) only, but 'padronissimi' of the fish, birds, and cave; and after having tendered not less than three unpremeditated sneezes in return for these courtesies, and received for each its particular and well-known vow, viz. that of long life (*vita!*) for the first, health (*salute*) for the second, and happiness (*felicità*) for the third, Giuseppe was ordered to proceed to business, which he did with gratifying speed.

All the world has seen wild beasts fed in menageries and zoological gardens, and all the world can tell how the lion opens his majestic jaws and roars as if he were calling his friends from the antipodes to dine with him

—how the wolf howls surlily to himself—how the mute bear stands on hind legs and opens his large red mouth —and how the hyena hah-hahs at the pleasant prospect of the banquet ; but that exhibition, however interesting, certainly does not come up to the spectacle of a hundred ravenous birds clamouring for their gory repast. To witness the demeanour of these fierce guests at such a supper of Thyestes, was worth all the heat encountered and the haste we had made to be in time, for no sooner was the cloth removed, and the first whiff of the day's entertainment wafted to the dispersed members of the iron-beaked community, than a scene ensued which it would be impossible to describe; a legion of dark-plumed forms, unsuspected till now, came out à la Roderick Dhu, and stood confessed each on his own citadel, whilst the hitherto voiceless quarry was rent with the clatter of the whole wild aviary ; high on the pinnacles of their separate watch-towers might be seen representatives of all the raptores, or birds of prey, vultures, falcons, and owls, looking down eagerly at the keeper : as he moved round, the major part raised their ponderous pinions, and flapping them to their full extent, pierced the air in all directions with shrieks for 'meat ! meat ! raw meat !' *ἀκούω φθόγγον ὀρνίθων κακῷ κλάζοντας οἴστρῳ καὶ βεβαρωμένῳ καὶ σπῶντας ἐν χηλαῖσιν.* Ariosto shall help us describe it :—

Lungo e d' intorno quel antro volando,
Girano *corvi* ed avidi *avoltori*,
Mulacchie e varii augelli ; che gridando
Facean discordi, strepiti, e rumori,
E a la preda correvan tutti, quando
Sparger vedean gli amplissimi tesori ;
E chi nel becco, e chi nell' ugna torta,
Ne prende, e lontan poco li porta.

Here the pretty 'civetta' fixed her full round orbs greedily on a little string of raw rodentian delicacies,

dangling by their tails in a bunch, which she picked from the keeper's hand with a toss, and forthwith began coquettishly to dissect. Here the greater owl was heard fitfully complaining in lamentable voice from a high cleft in the rock,—

Culminibus ferali carmine bubo,
Sæpe queri et longas in fletum ducere voces.

Here, too, unawed by a sense of decorum at the presence of his betters (and louder of tongue than any of his far bigger brethren the bustard, harrier, or peregrine hawk), screamed almost unintermittingly the noisy kestrel;—scolding lustily till his turn came round, and continuing his vituperative discord so long as there remained any meat or mice to gobble. It was striking to see the jealous stir and movement of all the birds as the feeding pole went round the enceinte from eyrie to eyrie with fresh relays of liver and lights: the greater of these *οἰωνοὶ*, however, generally showed much less impatience than the smaller; and when they had once distinctly uttered a note of complaint at any very flagrant instance of the violated rights of precedency, each would wait in dignified silence and composure for the result, and then do ample justice with beak and talons to whatever was offered them for dinner. The raw rations of buffalo-beef, served without stint, seemed to give very general satisfaction to all the inmates of the cave, with two pointed and painful exceptions, who evidently could not forget they were in gaol, and seemed to have given up all hope of accommodating themselves to their adverse lot; one of these was the noble eagle, the other the voracious vulture.

Broken-winged, broken-hearted eagles are by no means such unfrequent appendages to the suburban domains of Italian 'Holinesses,' and 'Eminences,' and 'Excellencies;' of 'most illustrious (*illiterate*) Dukes,' and

'most serene (*banking*) Princes,' as humanity might desire. There, in deep retirement, amidst the labyrinthine alleys of some dark rectangular ilex grove (where lizards rustle all day long, and the hoarse rattling of sultry cicadæ supplants the sweet jargoning of birds), *outside* of which time-worn termini, still on duty, mark the boundary angles, and into whose close-clipped intagliocd sides are ensconced *noseless* busts of incontinent empresses) exhibiting to posterity, in innocent marble, striking cases of 'majorum immerita lues.' Niobe sedulously hiding herself and her children from the sun; Romulus and Remus sucking a long-backed wolf; recumbent Tiber resting on his urn; piping Fauns, dancing Hebes, struggling Centaurs, (not fabulous, if we may trust their statues); and casts of half the cœlicolæ of the Vatican; there, where many converging paths issue upon a large tazza of clear lymph, bubbling in perpetual twilight, in that very spot you will be likely enough to see, caged in iron safe, or fixed to a ring by the leg, an unhappy *détenu* eagle, placed in such unwonted site with a view to startle the unfrequent wanderer through these dark retreats. We have seen them in yet viler durance, fresh winged from the Abruzzi, caged and bleeding in the turkey coops of the Rotunda, ticketed at a vile price, and bearing ignominious usage from the descendants of those nobler Romans who used to admire the great bird of Jove, adopted him on their ensigns, and marched with him in triumph to the world's end. Nor is the ill-treatment of eagles confined to Rome and its suburbs; it obtains throughout Italy: in far remote Alpine districts, where nature is all untamed, these birds are sometimes set in apparent freedom, but no less prisoners, on the pinnacle of some picturesque crag, in careful observance of the wild *genius loci*, to heighten the effect of the solitudes around.

It must, to any right-feeling mind, seem a very wanton

thing to multiply needlessly specimens of captive creatures which are not to be tamed; but, besides the general indefensibility of such a practice, the eagle makes special claims on man's forbearance, which cannot be repudiated without an effort. She whose stirring of her nest has been held out for man's admonition by a holy prophet; that 'most perfect of winged creatures,' who has supplied the muse of Homer and all the poets with some of their loftiest similes, the chosen messenger between earth and Olympus, who soaring heavenward on unflagging pinion, and with undazzled eye could hold in unsceathed talons the hot thunderbolts of Jove; the impersonation of freedom, the type of military glory; whose flight, portentous in result, was watched by anxious augurs, adopted when favourable by an undivided senate, and hailed by every citizen of Rome; on the strength of which victory was already anticipated, and invincible legions poured forth to the overthrow of distant dynasties;—is this, proh pudor! the bird to coop in solitary confinement,—to feed on the bread of affliction and the water of affliction?

Man is not naturally cruel to birds; all show respect to the robin and the wren, and we should deem him a churl who could tear the twittering swallow from his eaves; the king of birds only is treated with callous indifference and stolid cruelty; on his nobler nature alone fall unprovoked every species of *lese-majesty*, injury, and insult. The loss of liberty is quite irreparable; to man it is the heaviest of afflictions, and to every other sentient creature not a light one; it is understood by all animals, and is painfully felt by the tiniest and most domestic that creeps upon the face of the earth.

> Give me again my hollow tree,
> My crust of bread, and liberty,

is no doubt the fervent aspiration of every free-born mouse; and 'I can't get out,' the expression of a plight

the most piteous imaginable, whether it find utterance through the wicker bars of a starling's cage, or remain pent up, to goad in voiceless woe the heart of the prince of falcons. The Marchese A——'s caverned eagles formed no exception to this rule, but were, in fact, most striking and touching examples of it; immured in perpetual gloom, remote from every endearing tie, and shut up with birds of very different tastes and habits from their own, they were sad and crestfallen, beyond their wont. One, in particular, attracted our attention, as he sat, the impersonation of melancholy, looking with a reproachful expression from uncongenial associates to an impassive keeper, as if he would have asked, in the words of Martial, 'Aquilas similes facere noctuis quæris?' 'Do you hope to turn me into an owl by forcing me into the society of owls?' But as the question was not put, no reply ensued, and the old man continued catering for the assembly, whilst his drooping state-prisoner, glancing despondingly at his tethered talons, showed plainly that the iron had entered into his soul. This forlorn high-perched bird reproduced to our memory another scene of kindred sadness: the arch of Septimius Severus rose unbidden to view, and there, all negligent of attire, drugged in woe, and bending beneath a hopeless destiny, the familiar forms of those melancholy, manacled kings, which we had so often stolen out into the moonlit Forum to visit, stood forth each in his high-perched nich; unscathed wrecks of human grandeur, they exhibit to the most thoughtless striking illustrations of the different dealings of time; displaying, after the lapse of many centuries, the same clouded brow; and making the same mute appeal to pity now, as when they were first put up, amidst shouting pæans, the roar of the rabble, and processions of insulting victors long since returned to dust:

> Tho' Scorn has ceased her taunt, and Joy long ceased to feel,
> Grief yet survives to tell of woes that never heal.

The vulture was as ill at ease in this stony prison as the eagle, but his annoyance was of another kind; the want that preyed upon his ignoble mind was not want of air, light, and liberty, but want of an indefinite supply of victuals; he seemed to our eye to be following in abstract reverie the course of some Egyptian caravan, or to be feeding his fancy a second time in prowling amongst the ruins of some well-sacked city, or to be reconsidering wistfully those larger supplies of the bounteous battle-field, which have filled the maw of his race from the days of 'manslaying Hector,' 'the Macedonian madman and the Swede,' to those of the Corsican despot and his marshals; when, whatever might be the fate of the eagle, the vulture's portion of the prey was assured from the first charge. His luxurious ancestors, *ἀνδροφθόρου βεβρῶτες αἵματος λίπος*, had fattened on *foie gras* entertainments of Prometheus liver, à la Périgord, and had beaked and clawed at pleasure the whole splanchnology of the giant Tityus, whose body covered many roods of pasture-ground, and was their exclusive perquisite; how then could these their restricted and coerced descendants, fed upon the sorry gaol-bird's allowance of only two *rotole* of buffalo per day, and that at fixed hours, with no intermediate lunch or *goûté* to beguile the weary time, be expected or be able to look cheerful, or to stomach such a *βίος ἀβίωτος* as this? They continued accordingly staring moodily ahead, and disdaining to take any notice of what was passing, till the raw meat touching their contumelious beaks, each bird seized it with a clutch, and tore it sullenly and slowly to pieces, 'unguibus et rostro *tardus* trahit ilia vultur,' as Ovid wrote many centuries ago, after seeing one dine.

But neither these incarcerated *solitaires*, nor the gulls and other aquatic birds which peered and peeped out from among the crevices of the rocks, or floated about

on the surface of the mimic sea, nor the sombre character of the scene itself, were by any means all, or even the chief objects of interest in this rocky pantheon of a cave: one must look through the clear speculum, delve far down into the deep hyaloid, and glance from the chained birds above to the unshackled offspring of the waters beneath, for the most striking and pleasing part of the exhibition. There might be seen a goodly reunion of all the rare and more elegant members of the Mediterranean fish community, met together for the purpose of enjoying life, and of making themselves mutually agreeable. No concealed monster of cruelty disturbed these blissful retreats; for no wolf in sheep's clothing could possibly gain access, since none were admitted here without a previous good character and a close inspection of teeth. The waters glittered and glowed with the passing forms of ribbon-fish, colias, donzelli and other labridæ, all in prime condition, and with scales fresh burnished, moving up and down in conscious security, flouting each other with their tails, or in full chase round the basin, playing bo-peep among the angles of the jutting rocks; now rising leisurely to the surface, now darting down suddenly to the bottom. Here, pre-eminent among the rest in singularity of structure and endowment, if not in personal beauty, glided the main objects of our attraction to the cave, the flying-fish, for whose sake we have brought the reader within its precincts. As we looked down from a commanding point of rock upon their wide-spread front fins, and could count, as they swam slowly by, the number of azure dots that embellished the surface, and met those large, bright orbs, which have procured this dactylopterus the name of 'civetta,' or sea-owl, and saw into that lucent* cinnabar-red mouth and fauces which, opening in the dusk, seemed to

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* Rondolet and Salviani.

glow as though filled with red-hot coals, we had seen quite enough to have indelibly impressed on our memory the form of this most interesting fish. To linger till the twilight prevailed outside as well as in, was hardly a matter of choice; and when the courteous old man (who had marked his visitor's pleasure with evident satisfaction) at length permitted him to withdraw, it was not till a cordial invitation had been frankly tendered and accepted of renewing an acquaintance with the singular live-stock of the cavern.

Before taking leave of the Gurnard and his group, we shall devote a moment to those minikin fish, the gasrostei, or sticklebacks, of which, though there are no ancient records extant, it is to be presumed the old Romans could hardly have been ignorant, since they abound throughout Italy (as, indeed, everywhere else), and constitute the 'frittura' of many a gallant sportsman, who shoots this small game from a crazy gun, loaded with dust-shot, or inveigles it into close-meshed nets or osier weirs. There can, therefore, we think, be little doubt that the ancient, as well as the modern, Roman schoolboy was wont to whip this smallest of fresh-water inmates out of the Tiber with a thorn or crooked pin, though it may very fairly be doubted whether any of those antepapal urchins had so costly a material as a glass bottle to put them in. Sticklebacks are especially abundant in the Nar, whence they find their way into the Tiber and visit Rome, as no doubt they were in the habit of doing from her earliest days. In spite of their very diminutive size, sticklebacks are by no means without use; the extreme fecundity of the tribe compensating for personal smallness in its members; they are extensively employed, says Cuvier, both 'in England and in the north, to manure land, to feed pigs, and to make oil.' The trivial names for this fish are extremely various; *épinoche* in French, *stichling*, German, *steckelbaar*,

Dutch, and its various Italian aliases—spinarola, scardofisso, scoppali, scardapesce, scamarolo, all point to the spines with which the bodies of these little fish are beset; the only difference between the scientific and more common names being, that the first calls the bearers of these prickles stickle-backs, and the last stickle-bellies; probably these names include, like our own, many distinct species, for it is a numerous little group. The following lively sketch of the proceedings of stickle-backs (from the Annals of Natural History) show that Mr. Pickwick's labours and assiduity to ascertain as much as he could respecting their habits, were not misdirected. 'When a few are first turned in they swim about in a shoal, apparently exploring their new habitation. Suddenly one will take possession of a particular corner of the tub, or, as will sometimes happen, of the bottom, and instantly attack his companions.* If any of them ventures to oppose his sway, a regular and most furious battle ensues; the two combatants swim round and round each other with the greatest rapidity, biting and endeavouring to pierce each other with their spines, which on these occasions are projected. I have witnessed a battle of this sort which lasted several minutes before either would give way; and when one does submit, imagination can hardly conceive the vindictive fury of the conqueror, who, in the most persevering and unrelenting manner, chases his rival from one part of the tub to another, until fairly exhausted with fatigue.† They also use their spines with such fatal effect that, in-

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* It is a very voracious little creature: Bäcker reports that one will eat seventy small fish about three lines long in less than an hour, and as they are dangerous to large fish, they ought to have a vivarium to themselves.

† The heart of these pigmy heroes is a small triangular corpuscle, no bigger than a hempseed;—'tantæne iræ,' etc.

credible as it may appear, I have seen one, during a battle, absolutely rip his opponent quite open, so that he sank to the bottom and died. I have occasionally known three or four parts of the tub taken possession of by as many other little tyrants, who guard their territories with the strictest vigilance, and the slightest invasion invariably brings on a battle. These are the habits of the male fish alone; the females are quite pacific, appear fat, as if full of roe, and never assume the brilliant colours of the male, by whom, as far as I have observed, they are unmolested.'

Some other interesting traits of the stickleback, having reference to the extraordinary love it bears its young, have been recently given by a French naturalist, Mons. Costa; 'like the phycis, this little creature constructs a nest, displaying as much ingenuity in this work as any bird, carrying for its purpose small pieces of plants in its mouth often to a great distance; all these, together with minute particles of sand, it collects into one spot, and having allowed them to settle at the bottom, it smears them over with a sort of glutinous secretion, which attaches them firmly. It then presses them together by a peculiar movement of the body, frequently striking the mass with its pectoral fins, as if to ascertain whether it has acquired the necessary consistency.'

Sea Scorpions.

The sea has her scorpions as well as the land; and 'pro perca scorpio' is a familiar marine proverb implying a very bad rate of exchange. Unlike its namesake on shore, possessed of only one solitary tail-sting, the head of this scorpion-fish is surrounded with goads and prickles. 'Scorpæna's poisoned head, beset with spines,' is Ovid's apt description of it. '*Αλιεὺς πληγεὶς νόον οἴσει*, is a Greek adage, akin to our English one, 'A

burnt child fears the fire,' implying that no wounded fisherman will rashly expose himself to a second hurt. Pliny's recommendation, therefore, that the scorpæna be held either head downwards by the tail, or firmly grasped (like a nettle) round the middle between finger and thumb, is so much superfluous good advice, since none but a person void of eyes or understanding would on any account think of handling it otherwise. The attestations of the mischievous properties of the wounds inflicted by this rascasse, as they call him at Marseilles,* (which, if it be not a patois word for 'rascal,' we give up etymology as a vain conceit,) are endless, and, as usual, great exaggerations of the truth. The severe smart of an ordinary cut, the pungency of which is often heightened no doubt by a little brine entering the incision, used to be ascribed formerly to a 'morbus venenatus' set up in the part; and cases are continually quoted by the older modern pathologists of dire mischiefs succeeding these supposed envenomed pricks. 'J'ai vu,' writes Sonnini, 'un enfant bien blessé de ce poisson le voulant cacher dans son sein, lequel je guéris' (how complacently he misinforms the credulous!) 'en lui mettant dessus de la plaie un surmulet fendu en deux et le foie du scorpène même, d'où par expérience j'ai connu être vrai ce que les anciens ont cent de remèdes contre la blessure du scorpène.'† The Arabian physicians deal in the same Arabian tales, wringing inferences from admitted facts wholly inadmissible: thus Avicenna had seen a dropsy supervene in one instance with fatal results from one of these fish-wounds. We, too, have seen œdema and death follow the prick of a thorn; but how many thou-

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* Diable Crapaud de Mer, Scrofanello, and Kleinschuppigter Drachenkopf, are other synonyms.

† Lime drugged with liver of rascasse is highly medicinal in hepatic and vesical affections.

sand fingers are pricked thus every autumn without one such 'sinistre' being the result? The morbific matter, where mischief has resulted, is not inoculated, but lies within. Fortunately for this, as for other fish-wounds, there have always been a hundred ready nostrums at hand (each infallible in its way), prescribed by ignorance and adopted by the credulous as equally safe and certain, so that the only difficulty which presented itself to the fortunate patient arose from his 'embarras des richesses' in the selection of the speediest cure. We have no intention of making patients of our readers by inflicting any of these nostrums upon them, but there is a passage in Rondolet on the subject of fish-wounds generally, which is so distinctly homœopathic, and declaratory of that false fundamental aphorism, 'Similia similibus curantur,' on which it founds its pretensions, that Rondolet and not Hahnemann seems really entitled, *quantum valeat*, to the equivocal honour of first mangling the iatric art, and of reducing both physic and pharmacy to a farce! The passage printed below dates nearly two centuries back; all that time the homœopathic egg was incubating, which burst its shell some thirty years ago in Germany, and is now a well-grown goose in full feather, naturalized everywhere, the cackling pet of fashion, foppery, and folly; extremely easy to pull to pieces and pluck, but soon recovering its lost plumage and anserine strut, and likely, from the known vitality of the bird, and the fostering care it meets with, at home especially, to attain to patriarchal longevity.* A singular misuse

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* Principio nullum est venenatum animal quod veneni sui antipharmacam non contineat, cum enim partes diversæ sint, diverso quoque temperamento inter se adversari necesse est; deinde duplex antipharmaci genus esse comperio, *antipathiam*, et *similitudinem substantiæ;* ut hepar venenatorum animalium vulneri impositum *similitudine substantiæ* venenum retrahit, maximeque confert eâ parte quâ fel continetur. Carnes vero impositæ idem

was made as well of this fish as of the grey mullet, and of raphanus (horse-radish) in 'raphanidosis,' the punishment awarded to adulterers by the Athenian executive. The grey mullet, or κεστρεὺς, derived its name from a short thrusting Persian instrument of war, which it resembled in shape and was made to resemble also in function; 'quod pisce isto teli modo in anum immisso publice pœnas luerent adulterii,' a practice to which there are several allusions in the Latin poets, sufficiently remarkable to quote, but insusceptible of translation:

Necat hic ferro, secat ille cruentis
Verberibus, quosdam mœchos et mugilis intrat;*

and again in Terence:

Quem attractis pedibus patente porta
Percurrunt raphanique mugilesque.

A like employment was made of the present fish, the scorpæna: σκορπίος οὐ παύσει γε σὸν πρώκτον ὑπελθεῖν.† From the very different amount of suffering inflicted by these different agents, it is apparent that the same crime was looked upon with very different eyes by the legislature: the gravity of the punishment being proportioned to the rank of the adulteress, and the last the worst of any, 'ut nempe ex raphano pœnas darent qui cum plebeia aliqua mœchati essent; mugilem vero si cum honesta aliqua matrona; scorpio denique ex-

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præstant per *antipathiam*, ut viperarum caro morsui viperarum medetur. Terreus scorpius ictibus suis remedio est; sic mullus marini draconis. Aranei ac scorpionis ictibus medetur, si crudus atque dissectus loco admoveatur.'—From this passage it would appear that Rondolet was half a legitimist and half a quack in physic, and that, like some modern medicasters,

'Without the least offence to either,
He'd freely deal in both together,'

when it served his turn.

* Juvenal. † Aristoph.

cruciarentur si cum consanguinea vel sacerdote res fuisset.'

As food, the scorpæna is not altogether despicable. Archestratus, however, recommends none longer than a pygo, a measure of twenty finger-breadths; and as the flesh is rather too firm when fresh, it is usually kept awhile before dressing; with a like view Apicius has bequeathed to posterity the recipe of a rich sauce, composed, *inter alia*, of oil, vinegar, liquamen, honey, cardamoms, carrots, mustard, pepper, and a confection of various fruits.

Sciænidæ.

The next, or fourth family of the Acanthopterygii—the Sciænidæ—offer many points of resemblance with the Percidæ, but differ in not having teeth on either vomer or palate; they are moreover remarkable for the size of their 'ear-stones.'* The Mediterranean possesses several species: the S. nigra, which is the 'cuorvu,' or crow, of the Neapolitan market; the S. cirrhosa, a magnificent fish, shining in golden scales, and obliquely barred with transverse bands of silver and steely blue; and the S. aquila, the 'boca d'oro' of Naples, fegaro of Genoa, umbrina of modern Rome, an undoubted descendant of those illustrious ancestral *σκίαιναι* and umbras of Greek and Latin renown. The Hellenic word *σκίαινα* has been variously interpreted: Varro supposes this etymon to allude to the dusky or cloudy hue of the body; which Ovid however pronounces livid, 'corporis umbra liventis.' Salvianus explains it differently, and thinks the fish is called sciæna, from *σκιὰ*, a shade or shadow, to denote the swiftness with which, like a shadow, it flits

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* Hence one genus is designated Otolithus, *i. e.* 'Stone-i-th'-ears.'

through the water; while Rondolet refers it to the dusky and lighter bands with which in alternate series the sciæna's sides are, as it were, shaded. The etymological σκιὰ, or cloud, which thus obscures the name, does not extend to its possessor, the fish never having been under a cloud, but, on the contrary, always taking a conspicuous place amongst the 'pesci nobili' of the Mediterranean, compared with most of which it will be found to deserve its persistent reputation and present pre-eminence. From the sciæna's size, personable appearance, and from the delicate whiteness of its flakes at table, it has long been honoured by the inhabitants of Languedoc with the title of Peis-Re, *i. e.* Pesce Reale; but whence, unless in open derision of fasting, the French have imposed the more common name of 'la maigre,' we do not venture a conjecture. A remarkable physiological trait of these sciænas, is the purring noise they make under water, which is so loud as to be distinctly audible many, some say more than twenty, fathoms deep, and to betray their latitat to the fishermen. The large ear-stones, which more or less characterize all the members of the present group, were formerly recommended by the faculty as an infallible remedy in colic; a hint improved upon by the French jewellers, who in Belon's day enclosed them in lockets (the mere wearing of which was supposed a complete antidote against this painful affection), and thus secured—with more detriment, it may be presumed, to the doctors than to the disease—a flourishing and lucrative business.

The preposterous preference shown by the ancient Greeks for congers' heads, and the large sums they would occasionally fetch in the markets, have been noticed already. The Romans did not care for congers, but of those fish to which they were addicted, the head—like the 'hure au sanglier' in France—was always considered the *bonne bouche*, and part to be selected. It was so

with the mullet; nor were they less partial to the *προτομὴ*, or first cut of the maigre,* the glaucus, and of several other species; indeed, according to ancient gastronomic teaching, the superlative delicacy and 'capital' of tit-bits was always the head and its appurtenances; and for this, the whole carcase was often purchased by epicures, just as bibliomaniacs at an auction will sometimes purchase a large body of books merely for the sake of one small tome bound up in the lot. So inveterate, indeed, was this well-known predilection of the ancients for 'fish heads,' that it became proverbial to designate good men of business, not 'long-headed,' as now, but men who would 'stick to their fish's head.' When once a Greek glutton had fastened on this *friandise*, he never left it, but would hold on with the pertinacity of a bull-dog or leech. Thus, when an argumentative Greek 'Old Poz' is giving his opponent due notice that he is not to be convinced, nor has any intention of abandoning the point in dispute, he tells him he will relinquish it when 'Callimedon gives up his glaucus' head,'—that is, never.

Pogonias.

These vocal fish differ from the umbrinas in having their jaws tagged laterally with many, in place of carrying but one barbel at the symphysis. Schœff reports of them that they will assemble round the keel of a vessel at anchor and serenade the crew; and Mr. John White, lieu-

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* The high reputation of this part of the fish had descended to the Romans so late as to Rondolet's day, who acquaints us that the then cetarii of the Eternal City were in the habit of decapitating their 'maigres,' and of sending the heads as tribute to the three principal magistrates, the conservators of the city; as the laity of Montpelier send their bishop the head and shoulders of all dolphins caught within his *see*.

tenant in the navy of the United States, in his voyage to the seas of China, relates to the same purpose, that being at the mouth of the river of Cambodia, the ship's company were 'astonished by some extraordinary sounds which were heard around the bottom of the vessel. They resembled,' he says, 'a mixture of the bass of the organ, the sound of bells, the guttural cries of a large frog, and the tones which imagination might attribute to an enormous harp; one might have said the vessel trembled with it. The noises increased, and finally formed a universal chorus over the entire length of the vessel and the two sides. In proportion as we went up the river the sounds diminished, and finally ceased altogether.' As the interpreter told Captain White, the ship had been followed by a 'troop of fish of an oval and flattened form,' they were most probably pogonias. Humboldt met with a similar adventure in the South Sea, but without suspecting its cause. 'On February 20th, 1803, at seven P. M., the whole crew was astounded by a very extraordinary noise, resembling drums beaten in the air; we at first attributed it to the breakers; speedily it was heard all over the vessel, especially towards the poop, and was like the noise which escapes from fluid in a state of ebullition: we began to fear there might be some leak in the bottom. It was heard synchronously in all parts of the vessel, but finally, about nine P. M., ceased altogether.' How these fish manage to *purr* in the deep, and by means of what organ they communicate the sound to the external air, is wholly unknown. Some suppose it to proceed from the swim-bladder; but if that be the drum, what is the drum-stick that beats upon it? and cushioned as it is in an obese envelope and without issue, the swim-bladder cannot be a bagpipe or wind-instrument.

Sparidæ.

Of the Sparidæ, the fifth and next family of Acan-thopterygians, the subdivisions are numerous, and many of the species highly interesting: there is no family, according to Lacépède, which quarters its members over so large a portion of the globe as this. It has some representatives swimming in all waters, fresh, brackish, and salt, limpid and turbid; and in every latitude, from the hot springs of Barbary to the icy hyaline of the arctic circle. From among a great many claimants to notice, we select for remark three fish well known both to the ancient and modern world; the Sargos, the Dentex, and the Aurata.

The perpetuity of the old Greek word *σάργος*, *hodie* sargue or sargs, still given to the same fish in divers localities, is sufficient to identify the modern with the ancient bearers of the name. No finny creature has been the subject of more misrepresentation, or had greater liberties taken with his natural history, than the sargos. Extremely uxorious, he never moves anywhere, it has been said, but in company with at least a hundred shes, to enjoy privacy with whom he will enter into any decoy (however clumsy), and place the whole party in the hands of the fishermen. This procedure, silly though it be, is exceeded by another which, if the account be true, places the intelligence of the sargos at a very low standard. 'These fish,' write their biographers, 'have so strong an affection for goats, that whenever a herd comes to bathe they flock in amongst them, skipping and springing out of the sea to enjoy their society while they remain, and long after the goats have left, the sargs continue near the spot; this being known to fishermen, they have only to dress themselves up as goats and enter the water, to secure as many as are in the vicinity.' Oppian thus relates the adventure:

When bleating concerts and the deeper sound
Of shepherds echo through the vast profound,
With eager haste th' unwieldly Sargos move,
By nature slow, but swift to meet their love;
With wanton gambols greet the horned fair,
Vault o'er the waves and flutter in the air;
Unhappy lovers, who too soon shall find,
Their pleasures hollow and their goats unkind.
Deceitful swains, the fatal hint improve,
And arm the flattering destinies with love.
A goat-skin o'er his back the fisher throws,
And sets th' erected horns above his brows;
The flesh and fat incorporates with flour,
And scatters o'er the flood a foodful shower.
The fair disguise and scented victuals' charms,
With joint attraction call the finny swarms;
They round the mimic goat in crowds repair,
Thoughtless their sports, their joys insincere.
Poor ignorants! a deadly mate they find,
His shape familiar, but estranged his mind.
A sturdy rod his latent hand extends,
The flaxen cordage from the top descends,
The fleshy feet of goats unhoof'd conceal
With odoriferous bait the barbed steel;
With unsuspicious haste the fish devours,
Mounts to the jerk, and tumbles on the shores.

John Jones, trans.

The old names for the modern dentice were in Latin dentex, and in Greek *συνόδους*. In both languages the fish received its appellation from a very beautiful apparatus of teeth; but whether the Greek original ought in fact to be *κυνόδους*, *i. e.* dog-toothed, or, as it has descended to us, *συνόδους* (which, from the beautiful symmetry of the *ridge* of its masticators, is an epithet equally befitting the fish), is a vexed question still in Chancery: and being moreover as important and difficult as the homoousian and homoiousian controversy, we need scarcely crave our readers' indulgence for leaving it to future critics of the Aulus Gellius school, and lovers of the tediously minute in general, to determine. The import of

the Latin and Italian names, 'dentex' and 'dentice,' is clear and free from any ambiguity. No fish, if we except sardines, anchovies, cefali, and trigle, is of more frequent occurrence at southern *tables d'hôte* and *osterie cittanti* than this. At every sea-side 'Albergo Reale' along the Campanian coast, dentici occur: and generally three or four individuals placed side by side grin from the opposite ends of a long service-dish, displaying such whiteness, regularity, and perfection of teeth as always to rival, and sometimes to surpass, that oral apparatus in the prettiest signorina at table. Beyond the mere details necessary for the identification of this species, there is nothing likely to interest the general reader, unless it be a lively *conte* of that great fabulist Elian. He relates that these dentici are of a very congregational turn, and indeed so unhappily social in their instincts that no danger ever intimidates or can separate them; the consequence of which is, that while they enjoy the pleasures and advantages, they necessarily also run all the risks, of confederate interests. Nature prompts the shoal to divide into two companies, each keeping and swimming entirely to itself; but so methodically and in such close union, that whatever evolution is executed by the seniors is immediately adopted by the juniors in the rear: thus whenever an exploratory bait thrown from a boat, chances to light over a moving horde of synodons, all instantly fall into rank, and eyeing the lure in motionless tranquillity, show plainly that the angler may spare himself further pains, as the shoal does not intend to bite. This discreet forbearance is well timed, and often saves the corps; but should it unfortunately happen, whilst all are thus inertly gazing, that some hungry dentex straggling from another band is caught whilst passing athwart the column, their doom is fixed, for the fishermen, aware of these gregarious tendencies, quickly let down the net, and the infatuated tribe, still

staring on, unscared by the descending meshes, are easily circumvented, and learn too late that safety is not always in a crowd, nor numbers and nonchalance any protection against diligence and drag-nets.

The orata is as well authenticated an ancient fish as the dentex, to which it bears a considerable resemblance, and with which it has been uniformly grouped. M. Duhamel confirms many of Aristotle's miscellaneous remarks respecting it, as touching the relative position of the fins, the frequency of its occurrence in the Mediterranean, and its passing thence at certain seasons into salt-water marshes; also as regards the diet of the fish, which consists of coquillage, its extreme sensibility to all vicissitudes of weather, and its liability to perish in winter from cold. He also mentions that the orata constituted in his day as favourite a side-dish at the tables of the rich as whilom in the days of Attic good cheer, and that the old approved mode of grilling was still in vogue amongst the culinary knowing ones of the south. To these details we may add that the orata is flat like a bream, which it moreover resembles in general shape, that it has large eyes, golden eyebrows (whence the origin of its Greek name, *χρύσοφρυς*, 'auri chrysophrys imitata decus'), and a mouth literally paved with crushing teeth—perfect millstones in their way, by which all kinds of shell-fish, cockles, limpets, pectens, and oysters, 'let them be living, or let them be dead, are ground to powder to make his bread;' for few objects, it is said, can resist their pulverizing powers, which crack everything, except perhaps stones, and even indent soft iron.

Amongst ancient sea-delicacies, the *ὄψα θαλάσσια* of Hippocrates, orata stood high. It is registered more than once in the savoury pages of Athenæus, and, in the description of an Attic feast, is mentioned as the best thing at table; so that in reference to its taste as well as teeth, it might not inaptly, if in want of an alias, be

styled a thoroughly 'crack' fish. It is told of one Mariamus, a noted parasite and buffoon, at Leo the Tenth's table, that he never could or would keep his hands off a cooked specimen of the orata, having always ready the line of a Greek glutton to justify the theft,—*χρύσοφρυν ἐξ Ἐφέσου τὸν πίονα μὴ παράλειπε.*

Lacépède, in his usual pleasing but perhaps hyper-eulogistic strain, speaks of the orata in these florid terms. 'Plusieurs poissons présentent un vêtement plus magnifique que la dorade, aucun n'a reçu de parure plus élégante. Elle ne réflechit pas l'éclat éblouissant de l'or et du pourpre, mais elle brille de la douce clarté de l'argent et de l'azur. Les Grecs, qui ont admiré avec complaisance ce charmant assortiment, et qui cherchaient dans la nature la règle de leur goût, le type de leurs arts, et même l'origine de leur mode, l'ont choisi sans doute plus d'une fois pour le modèle des nuances destinées à parer la jeune épouse au moment où s'allumait pour elle le flambeau de l'hyménée. Ils avaient du moins consacré la dorade à Venus; elle était le symbole de cette puissance admirable et vivifiante, qui crée et qui coordonne, qui anime et qui embellit, qui inflamme et qui enchante.' After which we may quote with effect a Greek line declaratory of the same sentiments; *χρύσοφρυς ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἄλλοις ἵσταται ἰχθύς.*

The ancients captured this fish in a peculiar way, which, as it is not yet abandoned in some places, deserves notice. The plan had recourse to, was that of planting a tamarisk hedge in the sand, at low-water mark, along the shore: as the tide rose and covered the hedge, the oratas, being surface-swimmers, were carried over the bar; but on the turn of the tide, so soon as the tops of the tamarisk were seen out of the water by the fish, they would instantly subside in the greatest alarm to the bottom, and there remain with their noses nestling in the sand, till the water became

sufficiently shallow to allow of securing them either by hand or by a landing-net; the whole procedure being so simple, says Ælian, that women and children were fully competent to manage, and, in fact, generally conducted it.

Of the sixth family of Acanthopterygii, the Mænidæ, we have nothing to record; of the seventh, or Squammipennæ, only to notice, that amongst the subdivisions are found two individuals, perfect sharpshooters, chætodon rostratus, and ch. toxotes, whose instinct prompts them to lie in wait for insects; and whenever any come within reach of a jet-d'eau which these chætodons have the power of squirting to a considerable distance, they surprise their victims as they rest on adjacent aquatic plants, drown, and then devour them; 'Il lance l'eau (says M. Cuvier, speaking of the last), 'quelquefois à trois ou quatre pieds de hauteur, et les manque (les insectes) bien rarement.'

CHAPTER XI.

SCOMBERIDÆ.

Κλυτὰν ὃς ἀμφέπεις Ἰταλίαν.—*Soph.*

THE conflicting sentiments of mankind in reference to social intercourse, are participated in by fish. Some, perfect recluses in their habits, live in holes, or if they go abroad, keep aloof, like shy John Bull tourists, from all wayfaring fellowship with their kind: others, subgregarious in their taste, swim about in small detached parties; whilst a third class, impressed with strong republican tendencies, rove the deep in vast hordes, preferring a public mob-life with all its inconveniences, to either a domestic, or perfectly private one, with a greater liberty of fin. The present group includes members actuated by each of these several propensities, whereof the thunny and mackerel represent the social, and the dory and sword-fish those of anti-social instincts.

The common reader who looks into any ichthyological work will probably be surprised to find, amidst the many large fish of this section, any of which might seem entitled to priority of place, the common mackerel standing first on the list. Even in our own race, where other grounds for pre-eminence are more obvious, it cannot be dissembled that stature always maintained, and still maintains, considerable claims to attention,—height, *cæteris paribus*, adding largely to dignity. We read indeed in the 'Rosciad'—

> Before great *merit* all objections fly,
> And Garrick acting towers to six foot high;

but the very terms of the admission show the disadvan-

tages of low or middling stature, which thus requires the highest display of intellectual endowments not to be looked down on; whilst, on the other hand, the advantages of standing 'six foot high,' especially if we can 'look six inches higher,' are so incontestable, that the maternal vow for a tall son is as fervent and warm as that for a comely daughter. If we glance back to Trojan times, we are not surprised to find mere stature appraised higher than almost any other qualification. The heroes of the Iliad—shall we hide it to live, or exeleutherostomize* it and die?—are for the most part boors in manners, sordid in motive, dull in apprehension, selfish in sentiment, utterly ignoble in conduct: fine specimens it may be for David to paint, for Buffon to describe, for fools to admire, and for milliners to doat on, but wide of that standard which responsible agents may safely laud, or aspire to emulate;† what then has handed

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* Ἐξελευθεροστομῶ, 'I profess my sentiments boldly,' or speak out, as *Luther* did.

† The ancients measured heroism much more by the carpenter's rule than by any moral standard. If it were asked in what, save superior height and bearing, homocratic Ajax excelled that 'scurvy knave' Thersites, it would be difficult to say; in scurrility, brutal implacability, and selfishness, he might surpass that ill-favoured dwarf, but not in any of those nobler attributes which we are taught to value. The code of ethics in the Greek camp was very much what Agamemnon represents it to Ulysses: 'Lo! each man labours all things for himself,' to which each man's ready answer would have been the same with that chief's reply: 'And than for self what better *he*, I pray?'[1] This may be a very common sentiment, but it certainly is not heroic. 'Live with your enemy as a friend, and with your friend as though he may one day be your enemy,' is a detestable maxim, assigned in modern times to Rochefoucauld, as it was in ancient days to Bias; 'but whoever was the author of it,' says Cicero, 'such a sentiment could only proceed from the heart of a villain,—impuri cujusdam

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[1] Ἀγ. Ἦ πάνθ' ὅμοια πᾶς ἀνὴρ αὑτῷ πόνει.
Ὀδ. Τῷ γάρ με μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἢ 'μαυτῷ πονεῖν;

down the names of these 'thundering chiefs'* to posterity as mighty men of valour? It was the pre-eminence of Goliath of Gath whom David slew, and of all those apocryphal giants of our nursery whom Jack did not slay—pre-eminent height; each man of them was *ἠΰς τε μέγας τε*, big and brave, as Calliope, describing her arch-hero Agamemnon, takes care to tell us:—

> The king of kings, majestically *tall*,
> Towers o'er his fellows and o'ertops them all,
> Like some proud bull that round the pasture leads
> His subject herds, the monarch of the meads.

Thus Homer, softened by Pope, sings of the Greek generalissimo, F. M. Agamemnon, in days when the chief points of rider and horse were the same, and consisted in size, weight, and sinew; when bravery was nothing without plenty of brawn to back it; when chivalry was accurately measured by expanse of shoulders, and a very small fraction only of the one added cubit to any man's stature conferred the privilege, as it conferred the power, of looking down, *ὑποβλήδην*, on the rest of the world, and treating it supremely 'de haut en bas.'† Now, though

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aut ambitiosi, aut omnia ad suam potentiam revocantis.' Sophocles fathers it upon Ajax, who thus expounds it:

> Ὅτι
> *ὅ τ' ἐχθρὸς ἡμῖν ἐς τοσόνδ' ἐχθαρτέος*
> *ὡς καὶ φιλήσων αὖθις, ἕς τε τὸν φίλον*
> *τοσαῦθ' ὑπουργῶν ὠφελεῖν βουλήσομαι*
> *ὡς αἰὲν οὐ μενοῦντα.*

The maxim however is equally worthy of any of these hogs in armour.

* *Στρατηγοὶ ἐπιβρόντητοι.*

† His size made Ajax so overbearing to Minerva, as to decline her proffered aid on the score of not needing it. Such audacity at last provoked retaliation from Olympus:

> 'And mighty towering Ajax (what can *size*
> Against the angry gods?) distracted lies;'—

mere height, we are free to confess, has never quite satisfied our moral sense as a legitimate ground for putting one man before another, even in war, unless as a mere machine,* since many historical heroes (like our own last and greatest), and unlike those of epic and romance, have been notoriously short; yet among fish we certainly do think that girth, length, and weight should have precedency; in place of which, the dwarf in the mackerel family comes first, and is the titular representative of the rest; scomber thynnus, scomber pelamys, scomber alalonga, scomber ductor, scomber xiphias, etc., being all derived from scomber scomber, the name of that familiar zebra-backed acquaintance of our markets, the common mackerel, whom we eat periodically with fennel or gooseberry sauce, and who alone, of all the finny tribe, claims the privilege of being hawked about the streets on a Sunday. In our present notice we shall invert the usual ichthyological order, and speak first of the most important of all Mediterranean fish, the scomber thynnus, or thunny.

Thunny, or the Fish of Many Names.

All the world knows the difficulty of backing out of a bad name. Unlike one of Monsieur Vieuxbois's shirts or Mahomet's mistresses, it is not to be lightly changed: and an ill-named dog slips out of the unenviable posses-

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a useful lesson to giants generally, who were too prone to defy the gods;

> Ἀλλ' ἄνδρα χρὴ κἀν σῶμα γεννήσῃ μέγα,
> δοκεῖν πεσεῖν.

* 'For *thus* the ram that batters down the wall,
For the great swing and rudeness of his poise,
Men place before the head that made the engine,
Or those that with the fineness of their souls
By reason guide his execution.'—*Shakspeare.*

sion only by the halter with which he also slips out of life. Unfortunately, it has not fared with 'proper' as with improper names. When Nature came fresh from the hands of the Creator unnamed, the various subjects of the animal kingdom were brought successively before our first parent for recognition and calling: 'And Adam gave names to all cattle and fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field, and what Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.' There is some difficulty with regard to fish, on which the sacred record is silent; Milton scarcely obviates it where he sings,

> Each bird and beast behold
> After their kinds; I bring them to receive
> From thee their names; and *understand the same*
> *Of fish within their watery residence;*
> Not hither summon'd, since they cannot change
> Their element, to draw the thinner air;

since it was as difficult for Adam to name fish he had never seen, as for them to go to Adam for a name. How long the primitive nomenclature lasted we know not, any more than to what extent it obtained; but that the original names began to be corrupted not long after the Fall is probable; and error had so far spread in the days of Greece and Rome that few traces of the archaic onomasia are to be found, but in place a number of false synonyms, invented to perplex objects once clearly recognized. Grammar, representing words as they ought to be, not as they are, defines a noun as 'the name of a thing;' but every one at all conversant with floras and faunas knows right well that the nouns they employ are not always the names of an equal number of things; that sometimes under the same substantive, unduly stretched (like an India-rubber band beyond its tether), a number of very miscellaneous objects are often collected; and again, that one single object may sometimes have as many different terms of designation as a Persian

lion. In our own race, a mere exuberance of these names creates no confusion or ambiguity as to the identity of the bearer: thus in the case of one John William Richard Alexander Dwyer, all these prefixes, we know, represent the same identical footman whom Justinian Stubbs, Esq., was happy enough to have in his employ; and in the case also of some petty German princess, presented at court with a longer string of names than of family pearls or diamonds, though we smile at the dower, we do not for an instant lose sight of the unicity of the lady to whom the onomastic necklace belongs. But this is not the case with regard to birds, beasts, or fishes; and when we read in our Buffons, under the word thunny, such a host of aliases as thunnus, thynnis, pelamys, sarda, auxis, xanthias, triton, thersites, cheladonias, melandrya, synodon, cybia, cete, etc., all designating the same individual in different stages of development, though now inexplicable by any interpreter but an Œdipus,—puzzled and perplexed, we are ready to join in the lamentations of a jingling 'patterer,' whom we once met at the corner of Paradise-row, rehearsing to the rats and rabble of that district the bygone advantages of Eden:—

> Now, sure, my dears, we all must grieve
> For the good old times of Adam and Eve:
> When all the beasts, both wild and tame,
> Promiscuous flock'd, and round him came;
> Whilst he look'd round from where he sat,
> And call'd them all by names most pat.

Θύννος, thynnus, thunny, was the word by which the Greeks designated the fish when it was more than a year old; of this there can be no doubt, as the statement is Aristotle's: the etymology of the term is not so clear as its signification. Some give it a Greek, some a Hebrew root; the former tracing it to *θύειν*, which means, to bound furiously, and admirably depicts

the conduct of the poor thunny under the scourge of the sea œstrum;* the latter, by a process of etymological conjuring not easily followed, have sought to *presto* thunnus out of 'tannim,' a word which we translate 'whales,' but which imports, like its Latin equivalent *cete*, large fish generally. Thynnis, the female form of *θύννος*, was the name of the thunny's thais, or wife, who, according to ancient tradition, as the time of her accouchement approached, used to leave the Mare Magnum, or Mediterranean winter-quarters, for a punctual periodic spring confinement in the waters of the Black Sea. It appears, however, from more careful subsequent investigation, either that these lady thunnies deceived Aristotle by a false report, or that their granddaughter-descendants have so far departed from the old ancestral arrangement, that many do not at present take this voyage from sea to sea, but drop their unhatched posterity about, wherever they may happen to reside.† This deposition of roe occurs generally pretty early in June; the young fish, when first evolved from the egg, and for some time afterwards, are called, says Aristotle, 'cordylas' in Italy, and 'auxidas' by the Byzantines: cordyla was a word by which the Cyprians designated a particular covering or wrap for the head; it then came by metonymy to be applied to this fish, which in its first infancy was often sold in a paper wrapper or toga. Martial alludes to this custom, and expresses a hope that his epigrams may escape being put to so vile a

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* *Τίς ἂν πότ' ᾤεθ' ὧδ' ἐπώνυμον*
τοὔμὸν συνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς;
νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δὶς θυννάζειν ἐμοί.—Soph.

† Great shoals of thunny, however, still repair to the Euxine, where they always find abundance of aliment, in consequence of the number of rivers which run into it.

use;* and Persius speaks of poems too popular to be made into retail 'cornets' of this sort.† As to the Byzantine term *auxidas*, Aristotle refers it to the speedy growth of the juvenile thunny.‡ All fish, he adds, increase rapidly in size, especially in the waters of the Euxine, which are so particularly favourable to their development, that amias (a species of thunny) may be *seen* to enlarge.§ A mere reference to the rate of growth of the auxidas will best show the accuracy of the great Greek naturalist here, and also the correctness of the Byzantine designation. The roes deposited at the beginning of June, shortly afterwards become young fry, and at the end of the first month are about the size of gudgeons, and weigh between an ounce and a half and two ounces; by the end of the next month, their volume and weight are trebled; by the time October is out, these infants of four months old are twentyfold their original bulk, and weigh above two pounds; an increment of bulk and weight which greatly exceeds not only that of the inmates of lakes, rivers, and ponds,‖ but of those also which, in common with themselves, fatten upon sea-water. All do not live to exhibit this rapid growth: no sooner has the mass of roe become fertilized, than the unnatural mother begins to devour it, and thus by far the greater portion of the nascent brood never reaches maturity. Those that escape the voracity of their infan-

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* 'Ne nigram cito raptus in culinam
Cordylas madida tegas papyro.'

† 'Nec scombros metuenda carmina—nec thus.'

‡ *Διὰ τὸ ἐν ὀλίγαις ἡμέραις αὐξάνεσθαι.*

§ *Παρ' ἡμέραν ἐπιδήλως αὔξονται.*

‖ Few fresh-water fish grow so rapidly as pike and carp; yet the former, during its first years, seldom attains a foot in length, while carp take six years to put three pounds of flesh upon their bones.

ticidal dam follow her a little later, when they are able to protect themselves from violence, on a first cruise to the Mediterranean sea. The first winter they do not change their name, but the next spring, on again accompanying the thynnis on a new spawning expedition to the Euxine, they bury themselves in the ooze, and after some months come out 'pelamyds,' being so called, says Aristotle, from this habit of hiding in the mud; *παρὰ τὸ ἐν τῷ πήλῳ μύειν*: or perhaps, says Plutarch, from herding together: *διὰ τὸ πέλειν ἅμα*. After passing the anniversary of their first birthday, these pelamyds attained maturity, and were dubbed thunnies in consequence. Aristotle does not directly say how long they enjoy their majority, but as the life of a *θύννος* is limited to two years, it follows, by inference, that he can only be a thunny for the space of one year. What then becomes of this large fish when two years have passed over his head? According to the above author, in his 'poetic' not 'logic' of natural history, he dies; not in fact, but, like Boileau's innamorato,

Toujours bien mangeant, qui meurt par métaphore,

in pure fiction, to come out some time after, a new fish with a new name—an 'oreynus' of unwieldy dimensions, or a brevet whale (*cete*), as Athenæus informs us. And here we are forced to stop, for at what precise period of this great scomber's career he rejoiced in the appellations of triton, cybia, melandrys, or xanthias, we know positively nothing. Pope, imitating Juvenal, speaks, in a well-known passage of the 'Dunciad,' of the difficulty of naming a handful of obscure critics and libellers:

Sons of a day! just buoyant on the flood,
Then number'd with the puppies in the mud;
Ask not their *names!* I could as soon disclose
The names of these blind puppies as of those.

The difficulty of distinguishing these '*fish* of a day,' whether buoyant or in the mud, is of a different kind; their names we have; the puzzle is, in affixing to each its proper owner. As to the word 'apolectus,' with which we close the list, its meaning is not obscure, nor its application difficult; the Ætolian senators were called 'apolecti,' being all picked and chosen men: applied ichthyologically to the thunny, and probably to young specimens only, it implied that they were of great reputation—the very pick and prime of the market. Now, if this be really the intention of the comparison, we can only hope, charitably, that the Ætolians were better represented than the fish.

A number of different devices were had recourse to for taking thunnies. Aristotle tells us that one way was to transfix the fish as it lay basking like a pike on the surface of the water. Suidas, speaking of the same practice, uses the verb *θυννάζειν* (literally, to harpoon), to designate it. A second plan, detailed by Oppian, and practised among the Thracians, in the winter season, was to pierce the thunnies as they lay in their mud baths at the bottom of the Euxine, by means of a short thick log, covered above with a sheet of lead, and armed on the under side with a fearful apparatus of barbed and serrated spear-heads: this formidable club was attached by a long rope to the bow of a boat, whence it was hurled headlong, and if rightly directed amongst a brood of pelamyds, the havoc it occasioned was terrible.

> Swift through the gloomy regions of the bay,
> The leaded engine lights upon its prey,
> And soon a hundred barbs, in galling chains,
> As many victims held in writhing pains.

'One poor fish,' as sings their elegiac poet, 'has his back crushed under the thundering weight, another finds himself mortally wounded in the flank, the belly of a

third is laid open; the gills of several are ripped asunder, while others are caught up by the tail :' Oppian's mackerel Muse having, in close imitation of Homer, given a very graphic description of some of these terrible fish-wounds, waxes tender in the recital, and winds up by declaring the mutilations and carnage to be so shocking as to soften the hardest-hearted veteran in the boat ; or, as John Jones renders it,—

> The various tortures of the bleeding shoal
> Command a pity from the stoutest soul.

Yet, with the usual inconsistency of her sex, a few lines further on she depicts the same boatmen grouped together exulting over the expiring victims, and triumphing in their success. It was not however by such desultory measures as these that the old markets were supplied with this fish ; in former times as now, nets (which, as we have seen, the ancients knew so well how to manufacture) were largely employed for the purpose.

Few creatures are so timid as the thunny; having very small brains (one 37·14th of their total bulk, which is relatively but two-thirds of the same organ in the shark, and half of that in the pike), their want of judgment is in strict accordance with this cerebral deficiency ;* so that the most trifling noise in the water will often frighten a whole shoal out of its wits, and into the snares of the least-experienced fisherman. This was well-known to the ancients, who accordingly took advantage of it in their manœuvres. On some dark night, a boat-ful of meshes would leave the shore, and row slowly with muffled oars to the spot where thunny were suspected to lie. As the place was neared, the whole ap-

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* Lucian uses the word *θυννώδης* (thunny-like) to express weakness of intellect in one of our own species; it seems to have been the Greek equivalent for one who was easily duped.

paratus of cork and netted twine was shot silently into the deep. The crew, having thus disposed of its snare, pulled quickly to one side, but on reaching the rear of the shoal, began forthwith to roar and bellow; at the same time belabouring the water with blows, and lashing up the brine with poles, oars, and boat-hooks; the thunny, scared by the flashing of phosphorescent light and the pother overhead, would instantly break their ranks, and rushing away from the tumult in the direction of the nets, hastily entered its open recesses as into a sure asylum, but was prevented from leaving them afterwards by the incessant noise and flapping of the hauling-cords attached to each angle of the nets. As the boats approached the shore, the men paused ere they ended their labours, to offer up a petition to the marine deities, whom they were robbing of so much live-stock, that they would be propitious to the undertaking, and keep out of the enclosure any treacherous dolphin or mischievous sword-fish that might be prowing about with evil designs upon the nets; after these preliminary invocations (which *mutatis mutandis* are still offered up by Neapolitan and Silician fishermen to the Virgin and the Saints,) the dictymum was dragged on shore, and, in answer to the prayer, generally full of fine fish.

Ælian gives full particulars of a plan for securing a large number out of those shoals of thunny, which in early spring arrive off different coasts. 'Some time before they make their appearance, the men collect together at various *θυννοσκοπεῖα*, or thunneries, (Strabo gives Papulonium or Piombino, Porte Ercole in Etruria, and Cape Ammon on the African coast, as posts of the greatest importance,) elect the most experienced of their number to the office of thynnoscopus, or thunny overseer, construct him a watch-tower, or, if there be a projecting rock commanding a good sea-view, place him there, to

telegraph the earliest intelligence of an approaching shoal. As soon as his practised eye discerns the expected column, he communicates to the attentive crews below by means of a flag the direction in which to prepare for its reception; they, always on the alert for the signal, no sooner perceive it, than with 'all the precision of a troop of disciplined soldiers or a band of well-trained musicians,' the whole party puts to sea, each boat under the command of its captain, and with great regularity and despatch shoot their nets in advance of the fish. In this way a vast hempen wall is quickly thrown obliquely athwart the course of the coasting thunny, which proceeding in a straight line, leap, without looking into its folds, and are thus completely 'amphibolized' and caught.' Oppian speaks of some very intricate thunny-nets forming quite a town, in which may be traced strong bulwarks, narrow portals, large squares, broad streets, and blind alleys innumerable. Into this fatal ambuscade, he tells us, the devoted fish advance with all the confidence of a besieging army entering a capitulating fort. The order they observe is most methodic: the van is led by the mighty *orcyni*, the *πρόμαχοι*, veterans of the troop; immediately after them follow the black cohorts of mature thunnies, while youthful pelamyds and immature auxidæ bring up the rear. When the whole corps has once entered the fatal embouchure, it is quickly lost in the intricacies of the vast spreading labyrinth, and being unable to retreat, are summarily despatched one after another by the cunning men who planned the decoy.

It was formerly universally believed that, owing to some obliquity of vision, the capture of thunny was more easy than that of any other fish. What the peculiar imperfection was, authors were not agreed;* some supposed it

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* The hazy vision of these fish seems to have been considered

to be owing to a glaucomatous or muddy condition of the transparent humours of the eye; others, that it proceeded from an unfortunate habit of squinting acquired by the young cordylas, and not corrected by the parents as their offspring advanced to thunnyhood; others, amongst whom were Aristotle and Pliny, that the defective vision, whatever might be its cause, was confined entirely to the right eye. Aristotle drew this inference from the conduct of these fish, who were observed to enter the Euxine for the purposes of spawning by the right bank; but on returning with their young brood in summer were noticed as invariably to hug the opposite shore. Pliny, after repeating Aristotle's report, endeavours to confirm it by quoting a fiction as a fact:—'There is,' says he, 'in the Bosphorus an exceedingly white rock, which, reflecting the rays of the sun on its surface, scares the thunny from the spot; the fish come so far in a direct course, but no sooner arrive within view of this glittering object,* than they start off abruptly, and rush tumultuously into the Byzantine Bay;' here, accordingly, the thunny fishery is exclusively carried on, nor was one of these scombers, he says, ever known to visit the opposite shore of Chalcedon, though the coasts are only a thousand paces apart.† Tournefort however declares

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an established fact; *τὸ σκαιον ὄμμα παραβαλὼν θύννου δίκην*, having 'a cast in the *left* (not right) eye like a thunny,' is a proverbial expression from Æschylus.

* This rock, called anciently the Golden Horn, was supposed to derive the appellation in consequence of the wealth accruing to the Byzantines from the great fishery carried on in the bay; Gibbon says, 'The curve which it describes might be compared to the horn of a stag, or, as it should seem with more propriety, to that of an ox. The epithet *golden* was expressive of the riches which every wind wafted from the most distant countries into the secure and capacious port of Constantinople.'

† Chalcedon was said to be called 'the city of the blind,' because the Megarians, who planted a colony there, had blindly

all this to be gratuitous assertion, without any foundation in fact; and he says, on the contrary, 'que la cote de Macédoine est très-poissonneuse, et certainement Strabo et Pline avaient été trompés par ceux qui leur avaient fait accroire que les pélamyds ou jeunes thons s'en détournaient épouvantés par les roches blanches cachées sous l'eau, lesquelles les obligeaient de gagner la côte de Byzance; au contraire, les pélamyds de Macédoine étaient si recherchés par les anciens, que Varron, cité par Aule Gelle, les mettait parmi les morceaux les plus délicieux; et l'on ne voit aujourd'hui que filets autour de cette ville pour la pêche de jeunes thons.'

A favourite time for catching thunny seems to have been at the full of the moon, when, allured by the silvery light, they glide in great bands through the water, and are easily kidnapped.

> The nets have been shot, and on careless fin
> The moonlit thunnies will soon rush in,*

was an oracular announcement to Pisistratus, which he, construing to mean that the careless Athenians were to be given into his hand, surprised them one day after breakfast whilst they were playing dice, and totally unprepared to receive him, and soon had the whole city as much at his disposal as a fisherman a shoal of thunny sporting by moonlight.† Another occasion when thunny are very easily secured, is whilst suffering under the malign influence of the œstrum;‡ whenever they are stung

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overlooked the advantages of the opposite shore, and so lost those fisheries which the Byzantines afterwards acquired.

* Ἐῤῥίπται δ' ὁ βόλος, τὸ δὲ δίκτυον ἐκπεπέτασται
Θῦνοι δ' οἰμήσουσι σεληναίης διὰ νυκτός.

† Belon mentions having seen an ancient coin in the possession of Groeler, representing a thunny swimming under a full moon.

‡ This crustacean parasite, which affects alike the thunny and the sword-fish, is the pennatula filosa of Gmelin, and penilla of

by these pests, the fisherman may spare himself all skill, and almost all labour, the wretched creatures offering themselves for capture, like the mice in Hudibras's holsters, and coming

> On purpose to be taken,
> Without th' expense of cheese or bacon,

merely that death may put an end to their suffering. Some of the accounts given of these pigmy tormentors are curious and striking; they creep, it seems, from their lurking-places in the mud, where they exist in such prodigious quantities that often the fisherman, on drawing up his lines, will find the baits entirely consumed by them; and entering stealthily under the gill-covers of their living prey, commence a persecution to which death only puts a period.

> When the fierce dog-star brings the sultry days,
> And feverish vapours taint the kinder rays,
> Then fearless of the waves, the ocean breeze
> Broods o'er the waters, and infests the seas.
> Beneath the shelt'ring fin the insects hide,
> And goad with poisonous sting the tender side.

Oken, and belongs to the family lernæa. Besides the terrible scourge which infests the skin, these unfortunate scombers have other parasites, which, vulture-like, prey on their vitals. Commerson relates that he has found ascarides and tænias in the thunny's intestines, fascioli in the peritoneum, filarias and other species in the stomach. So that this fish is liable not only to be tormented out of his wits by lernæas, but, like Herod, to be eaten of worms. Pliny supposed these parasitic pests to be only such common fleas and lice as we entertain on shore;—'In summe, what is not bred in the sea? even the very fleas that skip so merrily in summer-time within victuallers' houses and innes, and bite so shrewdly; as also lice that love to be best closest under the haire of our heads, are there engendered; and many a time fishers twitch them up on their hooks, and see a number of skippers and creepers settled thick about their backs. And these vermin trouble the poor fishes in their sleep by night, within the sea, as well as on land.'

Vext with the puny foe the thunnies leap,
Flounce on the stream, and toss the mantling deep,
Ride o'er the foaming seas, with torture rave,
Bound into air, and dash the smoking wave.
Oft with imprudent haste they fly the main
And seek in death a kind release from pain,
Vault on some ship, or to the shores repair,
And gasp away their hated lives in air.*

Not Orestes pursued by the Furies, nor the lowing fly-stung Io in ancient tragedy, nor Philoctetes *olollotoiing* over his foot, nor the knot of frantic *galeur blouses* who on the periodic reception-day force the doors of the Hôpital St. Louis, and rush in unbidden in poisoned shirts to stamp like demoniacs, *sacré* the doctors, and claim, in right of 'gale à grosses bulles,' instant immersion into lustral waters and six aromatic fumigations, ever exhibited a wilder state of excitement than thunny maddened by the burning stings of these marine gadflies! In the lunges of intense cutaneous suffering he loses command of the little brains he once possessed, and rushing headlong through the deep either leaps frantically on the deck of some passing vessel, or, lashed as by scourges, dashes himself in pieces on the rocks, where the corpse is found with a host of these cruel tormentors still at work upon his now senseless flesh.

The most important fisheries of the ancients were carried on at Byzantium and on the coasts of Spain, points where the Mediterranean by contracting its channel necessarily brings more fish into proximity with the shore. The rising of the Pleiades (May 11th) was the signal for the commencement of these piscatory operations, which were carried on till the setting of Arcturus (August 6). The modern season lasts considerably longer; beginning, according to Duhamel, early in April, and not terminating till quite the end of September; that month being

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* John Jones, trans. Opp.

indeed considered by the fishermen as their best: as this is about double the time that the ancient fishing was continued, it would seem that these thunny (unlike the Rechabite swallows, ever punctual, almost to a day, in their migration southward, from the earliest times) have materially changed the institutions of their ancestors, and devote half the year at present to the Mediterranean, where formerly they only spent three months. But who, if we except Neptune and the Nereids, knows where the other months are passed? With reference to another fish of this family, the mackerel, Mr. Yarrell very sensibly observes, that it may be fairly doubted whether they are not much nearer to us at all seasons than is generally supposed; coming (as char do, from the inaccessible depths of their lakes) towards the shore, in order to spawn, and when that purpose is accomplished, leaving the shoal water, and retreating again to the abyss. The reason why thunny, as well as other fish, come to the coast in spring, is, says Pliny, 'for that they are more in saftie under the winde, where the water is not so rough, and fulle of waves; and also to bringe forthe their littel ones where there be no great fishes to devoure them up.' Nor is their disappearance afterwards from the coast any evidence of a distant voyage, since they may be, as Aristotle has remarked of some other fish, merely 'en retraite.'

Modern Thunny Fishery.

The catching of thunny, nowadays, is mostly effected by nets; two of the most approved modifications of which are those popularly known in Provence as the 'tonnaire' and the 'madrague.' Of the latter, Duhamel truly says, no other combination of meshes can convey such an idea of human ingenuity and inventiveness in the retiary art as this. So vast a quantity of fish does it sometimes secure, that there is preserved in the archives of the active little fishing bourg of Couillourc, the registration of one

notable night's capture of a hundred and sixty thousand thunny, each weighing on an average twenty-five pounds, but many reaching a hundred and fifty. The madrague, like Oppian's floating city (of which it is probably only a modification and improvement) forms a vast decoy, stretching out over a large acreage of water; unlike the tonnaire, it is a fixture, and always on service, except when it is removed for necessary repairs, like a vessel taken into dock. Here the door of destiny stands ever open, and of the unwary who enter none ever return; like the Bridge of Sighs, it is crossed but once; and the inscription which Dante has placed over the awful portals of his Hell, 'All hope abandon, ye that enter here,' suits well with the character of its precincts. The plan of its construction is simple and easily understood: first comes a long broad avenue of from a quarter to half a mile in length, formed by the shore on one side, and a parallel line of deep-sunk nets, enclosing whatever enters it, on the other; at the end of this 'high road to ruin,' another hempen wall, at right angles with the shore, offers an obstruction to the advancing fish, save only in the centre, where a narrow passage permits the devoted band to pass onward in the direction of their doom; a second insidious entrance through another central aperture of a like nature secures a further progress, and when this is cleared, a third enclosure presents itself; and thus on and on swim the devoted fish, getting as they proceed deeper into the intricacies of a hopeless labyrinth, which terminates at last in an apartment with a meshed bottom, well styled the 'camera della morte.' To this very door of death, the thunny who are so unfortunate as once to have entered the avenue, are hunted on by two boats stationed in the rear, whose crews drag a net after the fish, to prevent their backing out, which, from the incessant shouting and noise of all sorts kept up to scare them, these timid creatures seldom attempt. There is something extremely

exciting in witnessing the wholesale capture of a herd of these great black fish, intermixed as they generally are with the forms of many of their large congeners, and occasionally with a sword-fish or a dolphin besides; and no one ever left the spot after one of these enormous hauls, without feeling that, however superior the whale-fishery may be in enterprise, it cannot yield its votaries half the pleasures and charms of these *κητοθηρίαι*; for, in the first place, the weather, to be propitious for the sport, must be fine, as Ælian* tells us; and on such occasions (in Provence at least) music and festivities go hand in hand with toil. The following is Mons. Lacépède's lively account of this 'pêche à la madrague:'—'La curiosité attire souvent un grande nombre de spectateurs autour de la madrague; on y accourt comme à une fête; on rassemble autour de soi tout ce qui peut augmenter la vivacité du plaisir, on s'entoure d'instruments de musique; et quelles sensations ne sont pas en effet éprouvées! l'immensité des mers, la pureté de l'air, la douceur de la température, l'éclat d'un soleil vivifiant que les flots mollement agités réfléchissent et multiplient; la fraîcheur des zéphyrs; le concours des bâtimens légers; l'agilité des marins; l'adresse des pêcheurs; le courage de ceux qui combattent contre d'énormes animaux rendus plus dangereux par leur rage et désespoir; les élans rapides de l'impatience, les cris de la joie, les acclamations de la surprise, les sons harmonieux des cors, le retentissement des rivages, les triomphes des vainqueurs, les applaudissements de la multitude ravie.'

We may quote, too, our own experience as equally pleasurable: it was early in the morning of a lovely August day—never since we had been in Sicily had the water looked more blue, nor the cactus-crowned heights of

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* Ἦρος δὲ ὑπολάμποντος, καὶ τῶν ἀνέμων, εἰρηναῖον ἤδη καταπνεόντων, καὶ τοῦ ἀέρος φαιδροῦ τέτοντος καὶ οἱονεὶ μειδιῶντος, καὶ τοῦ κύματος κειμένου, καὶ λείας οὔσης τῆς θαλάττης, etc.

Monte Pelegrino more inviting—that we put off in a boat from the bay of Palermo, and ordered our barcaroles to pull for the tonnaro, or place where the madrague lay, about a mile from shore: to seaward all was smooth; not a ripple broke the oleaginous expanse stretched before us, mapped with floating corks, and indicating, as accurately as on a ground-plan, the whole extent and figure of the mighty decoy—a town indeed in size: having pulled from one end to the other of the long faubourg, to the first submarine barrier, and then glided over it, we rowed with increased speed between battlements of cork and motionless buoys, and soon came to the spot, towards which some boats a little in advance of our own had been driving a shoal of thunnies, like a flock of timid sheep. 'Ecco la camera della morte; siamo giunti!' exclaimed both rowers at once, shipping their oars, and staring down into the depths to see what might be there: we did the same; but not discovering anything, the men resumed the oars, and in a few seconds laid us alongside an anchored barge,—one of two, which were placed as guards over each end of the 'chamber of death.' The first served as the *point d'appui* for the nets, which were being worked up from the near side of the opposite vessel. A crowd of fishermen were busy tugging away at what seemed to our impatience an endless cordage; by the shortening of which, however, as the boat duly received it, layer after layer, coil upon coil, and fold upon fold, they were slowly bringing up the reticulated wall from the bottom. Whilst waiting the result we had time to notice the fine proportions of the men, who, leaning over the sides of the boat, or standing on its benches, exhibited their athletic and agile forms picturesquely grouped and engaged in all those varieties of muscular action which each man's share in the labours severally demanded. A fine figure is, according to Oppian, a prime qualification in a fisherman:

First be the fisher's limbs compact and sound,
With solid flesh and well-braced sinews bound;
Let due proportion every part commend,
Nor leanness shrink too much, nor fat distend.*

And more perfect figures than theirs poetry could not describe, nor the classic chisel of Greece portray: every man was an Academy model: to perfect symmetry of limb were added dark flashing eyes, jet black hair, beard, and moustache; irreproachable noses, ivory teeth, and the rich-coloured complexion of the South. What a contrast to a body of sandy-haired, freckled, hard-featured, stockingless Highlanders, landing from a Scotch steamboat, and challenging, by their self-satisfied air, attention to an ungainly gait and knock-kneed deformity of person!

Presently a simultaneous shout proclaimed, 'La pipa! la pipa!'—our own boatmen, after repeating the cry, informed us that a sword-fish, or pipa, as the Palermo sailors designate it, had been seen to enter the decoy with the thunny, and must now be in the net: as the flooring had been drawn up several fathoms, the pipa presently swam towards the surface, to see what was the matter, and some well-practised eyes having caught a first glimpse of him, the crews testified their delight by three loud vociferations. Frightened by the noise and the confused scene above, the long form of the fish might soon be distinguished, shooting now here, now there, athwart the hempen court; he rose at last, in much agitation, to the top, but instantly dived down again, scattering the spray far and wide with a lash of his powerful tail. This plunge only carried him among the trembling thunnies, pelamyds, and alalongas, which covered the bottom of the net; then up he came again, to find every eye looking fishy, and every hand ready to deal the fatal

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* Opp. J. J. trans.

blow. Like a startled horse in a high-fenced paddock, the sword-fish now careered round and round the enclosure, vainly seeking an exit by which to bolt, but finding none, he backed a moment, then, swifter than thought, rushed on the net, ran his long weapon through, and made a large hole in the meshes; but becoming hopelessly entangled, his fate was sealed, and death followed fast: one lusty arm throws a heavy harpoon, and misses; another, with more steady aim, and a lighter missile, hits and wounds the fish, who, staggered at the blow, flounders from side to side, while the clear blue waves are stained all around with his blood; in a few seconds a dozen barbed poles lie deep in the poor pipa's flank, and after throwing up a whirlpool of discoloured water, as the blows of the fishermen rain faster and faster upon their victim, the crimson of the flood deepens, and in less than a minute from the first wound the gashed carcase of the great scomber is poised up safely into the boat, with a triumphant shout. 'Five scudi, my lads, for our share!' exclaims one of the excited mariners, as they lay him at last at the bottom; and 'Bless the Virgin and St. Anthony,' says another, 'there is not much damage done this time to the net.' 'Now, signor, we shall presently see the thunny,' cried out our barcaroles; and accordingly, as the sieve-like flooring of the 'camera della morte' was drawn within a few feet of the surface, a mixed multitude of large fish, chiefly of the scomber family, all in violent agitation at what they saw and heard (for the men were now gaily singing at the ropes), dashed and splashed about, till the whole enclosure was covered with foam. The work of slaughter soon commenced, and these great creatures, despatched by blows, were hauled without difficulty on board the barge.* The chamber being now

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* Sometimes, we were told, when a very colossal thunny is caught, one of the crew mounts his back, and will ride him, as

empty, was let down again for new victims, while we followed the cargo just shipped to the landing-place; thence, preceded by two drummers, off we went in a procession to the Mercato Reale, where we found many great eyeless thunny (the produce of a still earlier haul) already piled up in bloody heaps on the flags.* Besides these, there were alalongas, whose long pectorals had been draggled in the mire, with many other large and curious fish, and the formidably armed heads of two or three sword-fish, fixed on end in the upper part of the woodwork of the same stalls, where their huge bodies were exposed for sale below, cut up into bloodless white masses, like so many coarse fillets of veal; while whole hampers of labridæ attracted the least attentive eye by their lovely variegated and ever-varying tints.

The noise employed in selling the mutest of all animals, loud in every country, was perfectly stunning here; nor can those who have not witnessed the scene form any idea of what a Sicilian Billingsgate at market hour really is, when a hundred stentors are all bawling in unison, and each striving to drown his neighbour's noise in his own. 'Trenta sei! trenta sei!' cries out the padrone

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Arion did the dolphin, several times round the inner enclosure, patting and taming him before he is stabbed like his smaller companions.

* The eyes, being a perquisite of the crew, are torn out the first thing, to make oil for their lamps: the gills also and the roes, which are eaten fresh, are commonly ripped out and deposited in baskets by themselves. These various mutilations of the thunny render its appearance in the markets at all times unsightly and uninviting. In some cases, however, the fish are transferred in the first instance into an inner shed or shamble, where a whole troop of them is speedily cut to pieces, and the sections (each of which has a name and a market price of its own) are then exposed for sale. The young thunnies do not appear in public at all till they have been first carefully boiled in sea-water, and become *thon mariné*.

of one stall, now cleaving some large fish in twain, now chopping a yet larger into slices, which fall rapidly under the strokes of a ponderous cleaver at his side;

Τριχθά τε καὶ τετραχθὰ διατρυφὲν ἔκπεσε χειρός.

'Trenta sei! trenta sei!' repeat two journeymen accomplices, counting it at the same time on their fingers to secure accuracy, as they telegraph the information to distant customers, who cannot hear for the hubbub. One holds up a specimen slice of his wares, whilst he shouts 'guardi! guardi!' with the voice of a Porto or Lablache; whilst others are roaring 'tutti vivi! tutti vivi!' Here you are invited to buy 'a sedici' (*subaudi* grani), there, at lower price, but not in lower accents, 'a dieci!' here, one bellows, 'sardini e alice!' another there, shouts 'mendole e merluzzi!' while a third, under the name of 'fichi! fichi!' roars forth some marine delicacy both fresh and fragrant. Just as you approach each stall the bellowing salesman suspends his voice for a moment to inquire, in muffled thunder, whether your 'eccellenza' wants to buy; but on observing that you shake your head or walk by, instantly—like some shrill cicada, fitfully silent while a traveller passes under his tree—the loud-tongued Sicilian resumes his deafening importunity.

The thunny enjoys a far higher reputation abroad than we, accustomed to so many much better fish at home, are willing to accord it; but before discussing the merits of this scomber at table, it is but fair to say that the flesh of no species varies so much, according to its age, as this. Very young thunny form a delicate frittura, with none of the characteristic bad flavour of the older fish; a thunny weighing from twenty to thirty pounds, and measuring from three and a half to four feet long, is neither coarse nor rank: much beyond that period of development, however, the increment of size and weight is attended with a sensible deterioration in quality.

Those which are carried about the streets of Sicilian towns in the dog-days, upon poles, and disposed of with tuck of drum, are food scarcely to be borne, being, as Pliny says (will the reader forgive his vigorous expression?) 'enow to make a man belche sowre.' They attain occasionally very great dimensions: those weighing a hundred pounds are called 'scampirro' (a *patois* diminutive in Sicily for scomber); the 'mezzo tunno,' or half thunny, ranges from a hundred to three hundred pounds: Cetti says, a thousand pounds is no uncommon size, and that specimens have been caught of eighteen hundred pounds weight. Aristotle mentions one of twelve hundred pounds, the tail of which measured two cubits and a palm across; and Pennant, only a century ago, relates the capture of a thunny off the coast of Inverary, which, after filling his obese skin with herrings, weighed six hundred and forty pounds. This, *par parenthèse*, takes away Churchill's reproach of Scotland, that everything, even to the insects, grows thin there,

> And half-starved spiders feed on half-starved flies:

fish at least do not; thunnies and whales increase in corpulency off its coasts, and the fattest herrings in the world are those from Lochfine and its neighbourhood.

One of the largest, if not the very largest, thunny ever heard of, is that of which Aldrovandi gives full particulars, as he received them from a high functionary of Spain: this real cete of a scomber measured thirty-two feet lengthways, and had at the broadest part a girth of sixteen feet; facts which, as they rest upon Spanish, not on Greek veracity, it would be highly improper to question: there could also be no doubt that this fish was a thunny, for it had been pickled, and as the relator truly says, there can be no mistake in the flavour and fibre of that chip-like melandrian food.*

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* A sketch of this thunny, sent to the Italian naturalist, is

Galen reckons amongst fish of hard fibre whales, dolphins, seals, and large old thunny, which last, he says, come very near to them in indigestibility, though they are not so palatable. Besides those differences which age and size induce in the flavour and condition of this fish, must be further added the modifying influences of site. Archestratus, the Grecian Quin, who travelled over the world for his stomach's sake, has left it upon record, to benefit posterity, that the thunny of Constantinople, Carystium, and Sicily, are not to be despised, though they are exceeded by those of Hipponium, in Italy; whilst he has bracketed off the Samian specimens as ineffably good, and only fit to be put upon Jupiter's table or his own. The part most in esteem fresh was the belly:

> Basse, conger's head, and thunny's under side,*
> Are luxuries to slender means denied,

is only one of many Greek fragmentary attestations which might be cited to prove the high relish for this particular cut of the thunny. Athenæus recommends it ἐν μυττωτῷ, —*i. e.* stuffed with onions and some other of the more acrid condiments, to which, for indigestibility, our goose and onions must be a light dish. The Ligurians, says Jovius, eat it under the name of 'azeminum,' stewed in oil and Corsican wine with pounded pepper and chopped onion; another capital recipe, we should fancy, if there were not too many known already, for nightmare. All

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given in his volume 'De Piscibus;' and a singular circumstance connected with its capture, which occurred off Gibraltar in 1565, was the appearance (reproduced in the plate) of a whole fleet of ships painted along its sides from tail to gill-flaps, in anticipation, no doubt, of the Spanish Armada then preparing to invade England.

* This is called 'sorra' in Sardinia, where it is held to this day as a delicacy, selling at double the price of either the back or flanks.

the carcase was salted and pickled, and sold under various names, as *κήτημα*,* *μῆλα ποντικὰ*,† *θυνναῖα ταρίχη*.‡ The best part for pickling was the belly, already mentioned as the best part fresh.§ The next in esteem was the 'omotarichum,' or pickled shoulder; lastly came the dry parts, 'cybias, melandrias, and uræas:' the first and last were lumps, generally in cubes, cut out of the back or tail; the other, yet served in oil by dirty stewards on board Mediterranean steamers, we had long ago (before reading Pliny's etymology of the word melandria, which confirms it) described in 'Blackwood' as 'like veneers of mahogany in appearance, and tasteless as any wood.'

The eating of these coarse scombers is so associated in our mind with one of those provisionless Sicilian *locande*, boasting 'nuovi mobili e buon servizio' (which means, a thunny supper and a buggy bed), that we cannot dismiss the fish till we have attempted to give our readers a sketch of it: the Magpie of Calatafimi and the manes of Theocritus forgive us, if, in a paroxysm of indigestion, we have done it any injustice.

Lodged for the night, O Muse! begin
To sing the true Sicilian inn,
Where the sad choice of six foul cells
The least exacting traveller quells;
(Though crawling things, not yet in sight,
Are waiting for the shadowy night,
To issue forth when all is quiet,
And on your feverish pulses riot:)
Where one wood shutter scrapes the ground,
By crusts, stale bones, and garbage bound;
Where unmolested spiders toil
Behind the mirror's mildew'd foil;
Where the cheap crucifix of lead
Hangs o'er the iron tressel'd bed;

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* Ath. † Gal. ‡ Ath.

§ This is still largely sold throughout Italy as the prime cut; it is called tarentello.

Where the huge bolt will scarcely keep
Its promise to confiding sleep,
Till you have forced it to its goal
In the bored brickwork's crumbling hole;
Where in loose flakes the whitewash peeling
From the bare joints of rotten ceiling,
Give token sure of vermin's bower,
And swarms of bugs that bide their hour.
Though bands of fierce mosquitoes boom
Their threatening bugles round the room,
To bed! ere wingless creatures crawl
Across the path from yonder wall,
And slipper'd feet unheeding tread
We know not what. To bed! to bed!

What can those horrid sounds portend?
Some waylaid traveller near his end,
From ghastly gash in mortal strife,
Or blow of bandit's blood-stained knife?
No! no! they're bawling to the *Virgin*,
Like victim under hands of surgeon!
From lamp-lit *daub* proceeds the cry
Of that unearthly litany. . . .
And now a train of mules goes by!—
One wretch comes whooping up the street
For whooping's sake!—And now they beat
Drum after drum for market mass:
Each day's transactions on the *place*,
All things that go, or stay, or come,
They herald forth by tuck of drum.—
Day dawns! a tinkling, tuneless bell,
Whate'er it be, has news to tell;
Then twenty more begin to strike
In noisy discord, all alike;
Convents and churches, chapels, shrines,
In quick succession break the lines,
Till every gong in town at last
Its tongue had loosed, and sleep is past.
So much for nights! New days begin,
Which land you in another inn.—
Oh! he that means to see *Girgenti*
Or *Syracuse*, needs patience plenty!

CHAPTER XII.

SCOMBERIDÆ (CONTINUED).

The Mackerel.

His mistum jus est oleo, quod prima Venafri
Pressit cella; garo de succis piscis Iberi.—*Hor.*

Σκόμβρος and Lacertus, (words by which, though one fish only was at first intended, several species came by degrees to be included,) are the Greek and Latin equivalents for mackerel. It would have been impossible to guess the subgeneric import of the Greek, but from the known meaning of the Latin word; for when Pliny tells us that the colias is the smallest kind of lacertus, 'colias lacertorum minimus,' it becomes certain that the Latins under that term (and we may suppose the Greeks under its equivalent, σκόμβρος) recognized and designed several sorts of mackerel. As to the ancient colias, it seems, from the accounts given of its dimensions by Athenæus (who compares it to a sardine), to be probably the S. pneumatophorus, a species much smaller than our own mackerel, and of frequent occurrence in the Nice and Naples markets.* Both S. colias, S. pneumatophorus, and S. scomber are yet confounded by the lazzaroni in vernacular *patois*, under the common denomination of scurmu; and as all mackerel are nearly similar in form, hue, and the 'scoliographic' markings of their sides and backs, it is probable that the ancients (who, like the Neapolitan sailors, were ignorant of any internal anato-

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* Of these mackerel, often immature, and perhaps not more than two-thirds grown, from four to five go to make up a *rotolo*, *i. e.* two pounds.

mical differences, or any other, except difference of size often mistook one sort for another, and confounded half-grown individuals of a larger with full-grown individuals of a smaller species. Such grounds for the separation of mackerel into different species appearing to Scaliger as wholly untenable, he came to the conclusion that all mackerel are but varieties of the same fish; and that those of the ocean are bigger than Mediterranean specimens only because the ocean is bigger, and affords its fish more scope for escape, and consequently more time for development, or, as he neatly expresses it, 'In oceani laxitate, fuga moram, mora parit incrementum; itaque grandescere, quia non capiuntur.' The conjectures of the ancients, however, as to diversity of species, have been at length fully confirmed, and the doubts suggested by Scaliger completely removed, by an interesting discovery, which had escaped the penetrating eye of Aristotle, and was first made by two French *savans*, so lately as the beginning of the present century. In the year 1806, Messrs. Biot and Delaroche ascertained that whilst some mackerel, like our own, lack, others, like S. colias and S. pneumatophorus, possess an air-bladder; and as this singular difference in internal organization occurs in creatures which are equally sportive and equally fleet, it clearly establishes, first, the existence of at least two quite distinct species of mackerel; and proves incidentally, in the second place, that this organ, so often described as chiefly designed for assisting the locomotive powers of fish, must answer some other end in their economy, not hitherto clearly made out.

Of the derivation of the Greek word *σκόμβρος*, nothing is certainly known. The Latin synonym *lacertus*, or lizard, seems well selected to point out a fish like its namesake on land in colour,* markings, and make, and

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* Pliny calls it sulphur-colour, which strange misuse of the

particularly resembling it in a propensity to skip and frisk on the surface of the waves, like that active little quadruped sporting by the brink of a fountain, or scudding along a sunny wall to surprise a napping blue-bottle. The word colias, which stands representative for the same species both in Latin and Greek, is, or was in Belon's day, a designation not yet entirely obsolete in certain parts of Greece. Of modern names, though *scarmu* is the prevailing mackerel cry in and about Naples, *lacert* or *lacerto* is not unfamiliar to the ear of such as buy their own fish in the markets of Nice, Leghorn, or Genoa: with regard to macarello, a word soft enough to be really Italian, and even affirmed by some to be indigenous to Rome, we never heard it bawled once within the classic precincts of the Portico of Octavia (the Billingsgate of the Eternal City), and suspect, if ever used, that it is only as a modern tramontane importation, italianized, like *milordo*, out of compliment to English ears; the word mackerel is one of very old standing in our own vocabulary, and has most probably a northern origin; but whether this be so or not, both the usually assigned Greek and Latin etymologies are equally inadmissible; the Greek, which, either from the excellence of the flesh, its own personal happiness, or that which it confers on so many mackerel-eaters, would conjure mackerel from *μακάριος*, is obviously untrue, and particularly *un*happy; nor is mackerel 'quasi macularius,' *i. e.* the *spotted*, in lieu of what it is, a *striped* fish, a less unfortunate attempt to fish out a meaning from the Latin. If we are to adopt any etymology where all are

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word brimstone he explains elsewhere, where he tells us, that lightning and thunderbolts both smell of sulphur and are of the same hue; he most probably, therefore, speaks of the light emitted by this mineral during combustion, which may be called a sort of mackerel blue.

doubtful, Aldrovandi's 'magarellos seu macarellos e corporis macritudine,' seems the most plausible; the shot lustrous surface of the belly and sides is certainly macrous; while we are distinctly taught in our Church Catechism that in regard to a name, an M or N are indifferent, and in fact the change of one of these liquids into the other never offers any real difficulty in etymology. Touching the nomenclature of that particular kind called sometimes Spanish, sometimes horse-mackerel, though the latter adjunct often expresses no more than size or coarseness—as in qualifying the words laugh, mushroom, chestnut, or radish,—it is quite possible in this case that it may merely be the translation of *caballo*, which in that language not only means horse, but mackerel as well. Concerning the opprobrious employment of this word to designate a certain class of villains, called in Latin *lenones*, and *ruffiani* in Italian, M. Lacépède, after Belon, gives the following interpretation:—'C'est à raison de la rencontre des maquereaux avec les petits aloses ou pucelles vers le temps où celles-ci vont frayer avec les mâles, qu'on a donné ce vilain nom (maquereau), qu'il porte en France et dans quelques autres pays.'

All of our own race are not equally quick-sighted; and so it is with fish: some, like the shark, are famed for discerning their prey at great distances; others, like the wall-eyed thunny, are as proverbially blind: such differences depend, no doubt, on the varying conformation of the eyeball itself, or on the greater or less transparency of the humours it contains, on varying degrees of convexity and density in cornea and crystalline lens, or on the amount of optic nerve supplying the organ. To some such deficiency or abnormal peculiarity of structure in these several parts, is probably owing that singular propensity to be caught by gaudy and glittering baits, which distinguishes many members of the scomber family. The *dorado*, for instance, which, under the

ancient name of coryphæna, used to be caught* on hooks attached to a clumsy dolphin-shaped dump of lead, dubbed with feathers, is still to this very day secured by the same unartistic cheat, which, to his hazy vision, seems a flying fish. Thersites, another of the tribe, is taken, off the Cape, with long dangling strips of leather, fastened round a central weight, in rude imitation of a *loligo*, or cuttle; the thunny, again, is inveigled off Bayonne by means of a hook baited with a white dimity sardine, the barbs left bare, and the shank rendered attractive by a wrap of blue cloth; while, to mention but one more member of this short-sighted family, the mackerel, the subject of our present notice, is lured to its fate by the gaudy temptation of a piece of blue cloth, trailed along the surface of the water. Oppian, who seems to have been aware of the mackerel's weakness for flaming colours, and of the mishaps this is wont to entail, compares the rashness of its conduct to that of an infant coquetting with fire:—

> Just so the little smiling boy admires
> The candle's painted blaze and curling spires;
> Extends his hand, but dear experience gains,
> The greatest beauty gives the greatest pains.†

But there is another mightier engine of destruction than hooks, to which few other fish seem wholly insensible. 'In vain,' we know, 'is the net spread in the sight of any bird;' and though fish may not cope with birds in cerebral development, yet few of the finny tribe appear to view the meshy machinations of the fishermen with absolute indifference, or without betraying some symptoms of distrust. The mackerel alone shows no such timidity; the very neighbourhood of a decoy has charms for his inexperience, and it is the area accord-

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* Oppian. † *Ib.*, J. J. t.

ingly fixed upon by the shoal for public games; and the hempen walls are looked upon as a common lounge, benevolently stretched out by the fishermen for their benefit. Up to the fatal engine swims the whole legion, eyes it first, then noses it in motionless wonder and delight, and finally, waxing bold from impunity, begins,—like the Trojan youth, assembled round the mare and mother of their woes,—to play with the threads of destiny, 'fines *finis* contingere gaudent,' moving the meshes with sportive tails, rubbing their sides against the holdfasts, playing at prison-bars, and coursing rapidly through every open square that will admit a free passage to their bodies; thus in they go and out they glide, up and down, backwards and forwards, round and round; till finding a hole too small for egress, each struggling *détenu* becomes immovably fixed, and is presently dragged on shore with many a partner in misfortune,

Where tired he sleeps, and life's gay game gives o'er.

The occasional supplies of mackerel thus netted are incalculably great, exceeding in quantity the proceeds of every other fishery along our coasts, except it be of certain members of the Clupean family. In almost every mesh of the long reticulated work a fish is found impacted, besides the numbers enclosed within; but sea-crops, like land-crops, are subject to great fluctuations, and Cicero was quite right when he wrote to his friend, 'ad lacertos capiendos tempestates non sunt omnes idoneæ,' as indeed the following abstract from Mr. Yarrell's instructive book on 'British Fish' strikingly illustrates:—

The price of mackerel, in May, 1807, in the Billingsgate market, was as follows:—Forty guineas for every hundred of the first cargo, which made the fish come to seven shillings apiece! The next supplies were also exorbitant, though much less so than the first, fetching thirteen pounds per hundred, or *two shillings* apiece. The very next year the former deficiencies were more than made up, for it appears that during the season 1808, mack-

erel were hawked about the streets of Dover, at sixty for a shilling, or five for a penny; whilst they so blockaded the Brighton coast, that on one night it became impossible to land the multitudes taken, and at last both fish and nets went to the bottom together.

Mackerel are an exceedingly greedy fish, and from an anecdote of Pontoppidan, we may infer that their chief captor, man, would often become their prey did the opportunity offer. This author relates that a Norwegian sailor was destroyed by a shoal of these small fierce foes, who encompassed him as he was bathing (so it was not the poor fellow's blue jacket that attracted them), carried him out to sea, and contrived, whilst running him down, so to nibble, gnaw, and maim their victim, that his friends, in spite of all their efforts, were only just able to get him alive into the boat, where, in a state of acute suffering from exhaustion and anæmia, he speedily expired.

Mackerel, according to one of the 'mille et un' tales of Ælian, were trained by certain fishermen to act a treacherous part towards their own kind, entering readily for the purpose into an unnatural league with these men, who supplied them with food, whilst they in return scoured the seas and lured to destruction any wandering shoal in want of a pilot: the friendship between the fishermen and these decoy favourites was, says Ælian, of a most sacred and inviolable character, and even subsisted by some mode of tradition amongst the descendants of the contracting parties for many generations.

Mackerel are generally supposed to pass the winter in creeks in the remote north, and (on the authority of a French admiral, quoted by Lacépède) with their heads plunged into soft sand, where, in consequence of the compactness of the phalanx, their serried myriads, seen through the clear lymph, present the appearance of a submarine rocky flooring. This vertical position they

maintain till spring, when, on removing their heads out of the ooze, all are more or less affected with a temporary blindness, occasioned by an adipose pellicle, which, veiling the eye in winter, becomes atrophied and falls away about the time when their apocryphal voyage is supposed to be undertaken.

These supposed migrations of mackerel have given rise to wide excursions of the imagination, and to much ingenious speculation: Anderson describes the yearly march of the great unnumbered army with the confidence of an actual eye-witness. Having, according to that great non-commissioned Scomber-ductor, passed the winter in the icy seas, they wait for the genial time of year, to pour in succession along the coasts of Iceland, Scotland, and Ireland, in undiminished numbers; thence dividing as they approach the Channel into two columns, one continues its onward course along the west of France, Spain, and Portugal, and so on into the Mediterranean; whilst the other comes up the British Channel, visiting the northern part of France and the opposite coast of our own island, Holland, etc.; when having arrived about July off the shores of Jutland, this first branch of the integral shoal again subdivides, and sends a detachment to visit the Baltic Sea, while the remainder passes upwards along the Norway rocks, and returns to the northern point from whence it originally set out. What seems fatal to this theory is, that mackerel are caught abundantly in the south in *early* spring; as soon as, or even before, we see them in England, which is seldom till May, while the familiar name for them at Montpelier is *peis d'Avril*, or April fish. Another fact equally opposed to the supposition of this long northern circuit is that some are often taken in the Channel as late as November and December; now, as it is not likely that these few have come all the way back again by themselves, we may presume that the shoal from whence

they have strayed cannot be very far distant, but is probably lying *perdu* in deep water, within telescopic range, though beyond the reach of nets.

We proceed now to offer a few remarks on mackerel as an article of diet. Those of the Mediterranean are poor, dry, and indigestible, and if the meat be not 'gravissimum alimentum,' as Celsus, however, expressly affirms, it is quite heavy enough to irritate and derange a weak and susceptible stomach. Once or twice in the season, we, who have a choice of many excellent fish at home, may choose to sit down to a full-grown, plump, soft-roed, northern mackerel, well cooked, 'à la maître d'hôtel,' fried 'aux fines herbes en papillotes,' or plain boiled with green gooseberry sauce, or with one of oil and vinegar thickened with chopped parsley, and even find the dish no bad change in our bill of fare; but to dine once only on a colias or pneumatophorus mackerel in the south, with any sauce, or under any cooking, is an experiment no Englishman at least would care to repeat; and this seems to have been very much the opinion formed of these colias by the ancients: for though Apicius wrote many recipes for sauces to dress them in, and to pour over them at table, the mere complexity of the ingredients, and the abundance of the stronger condiments with which they are for the most part charged, shows what pains were taken to disguise a fish which nobody cared to eat 'au naturel:' indeed, we learn expressly from various ancient sources that these were not considered fish to eat fresh, but to salt, *ἐπιτήδειοι εἰς ταριχεῖαν*, as Mnesimachus declares in Athenæus. The moderns have not followed the ancients in this practice of curing mackerel: if we except Spain, where salt colias have still a good market, there is no other country in Europe where they have any considerable sale. The dried salted roes, unknown to the ancients, are at present in high request, and form a good substitute for bo-

targue. The only part besides the myology of mackerel which the ancients thought well of, were the gills and guts; of which last, as we have seen, they made the famous fish-sauce *garum*.

The Parian colias would appear, from the Greek line, 'Fair Paros, colias' prolific nurse,' to have been as highly favoured in Greece as were those of New Carthage in Spain; and as garum originated in Greece, probably it may have first been manufactured there, and from thence introduced into Iberia.

No fish spoils so soon in the keeping as mackerel, and of no other accordingly is the sale legalized on Sunday:

> Law order'd that the Sunday should have rest,
> And that no nymph her noisy food should sell,
> Except it were 'new milk' or 'mackerel.'*

'Argent, on a chevron between three mackerel gules, a rose with a chief chequey of the first and second,' are the arms of Dr. Macbride, the learned Principal of Magdalen Hall, Oxford.†

Sword-Fish.

> What Fury, say, artificer of ill,
> Arm'd thee, O Xiphias, with thy pointed bill?‡

Having other families of fish waiting to be introduced to the reader, we must not tarry too long over the present interesting group of scombers; our remaining notices, therefore, of the sword and pilot fish, the caranx,

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* King's Cookery. If we wanted precedent for this practice, we might find it in Nehemiah: 'there dwelt men of Tyre also in Judah, which brought fish and all manner of wine, and sold them on the *sabbath* to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem.'

† Moule.

‡ Ἆρ' οὐκ Ἐρινὺς τοῦτ' ἐχάλκευσε ξίφος
. . . . . δημιουργὸς ἄγριος.—*Soph.*

the dory, and coryphæna (species which it is impossible to pass over wholly in silence), must be very brief.

All times and tongues have agreed to call the first of these scombers by some name allusive to the warlike weapon carried in his mouth—viz. a sword, several feet in length, finely attenuated in front, and, to the dismay of the denizens of the deep, of a temper like that of its owner, neither to be trusted nor trifled with. At Genoa and other places where the common Italian designation of 'pesce spada' has been in some measure superseded by that of 'imperatore,' the reference is still to this polemic blade; Italian imperators being always represented in their pictures sword in hand. The pugnacity of this unrelenting fish is described by Ovid, or by somebody else, in the line—

Et durus xiphias ictu non mitior ensi.

Nothing indeed, alive or dead, seems to escape its fury; the larger fish and marine mammals, boats and bathers, are all in turn objects of attack, and even rocks themselves are liable to assault and battery.

Struck by the blade, the sounding stone gives way,
And shatter'd rocks their secret veins display.*

Sometimes rushing into a shoal of thunny (who flee before him like scared sheep from a hungry wolf), the xiphias fleshes his reeking weapon in rapid succession in their bleeding flanks. Sometimes chasing a sailing vessel of small calibre, he speeds like a flying spear right in between its ribs, and has been known to produce as much succussion of planks and commotion amongst those on board as when Ulysses and his 'uterine' brethren turned pale, whilst the crazy and staggering automaton quailed under Laocoon's lance. When the spada encounters a

* Oppian.

battur directly in his course, he runs him remorselessly through the body, as happened only some twenty years ago to a man who was thus transfixed whilst swimming near the mouth of the Severn. So boundless is the sword-fish's rage and fury against whales in particular, that many observers imagine his sallies against rocks and timber to originate in an error of judgment, that all these lunges are intended to punish leviathan, and are only misdirected in consequence of the imperfect vision which prevents this scomber, like many of his family, from accurately distinguishing forms. Whenever a supposed whale is descried, our savage *sabreur* rushes forward to intercept his progress, and suddenly flashing before his victim, either alone, or in conjunction with some other unfriendly fish, instantly proceeds to the attack. Relations of such sea-fights, attested by credible eye-witnesses, are not uncommon; we content ourselves with the citation of one of unimpeachable accuracy. Captain Crow, cited by Mr. Yarrell, relates that in a voyage to Memel, on a calm night, just off the Hebrides, all hands were called up to witness a strange combat between some thrashers (carcharias vulpes) and a sword-fish leagued together against a whale; as soon as the back of the ill-starred monster was seen rising a little above the water, the thrashers sprang several yards into the air, and struck him with their descending tails; the reiterated percussions of which sounded, we are told, like a distant volley of musketry. The sword-fish meanwhile attacked the whale from below, getting close under his belly, and with such energy and effect that there could be little doubt of the issue of a fray, which the necessity of prosecuting their voyage prevented the crew from watching to its close. The sword-fish is not less remarkable for strength than pugnacity, the depôt of its great physical powers being, as in most scombers, in the tail.

Foreign spadas are often on a very grand scale, and large specimens occasionally visit our own coasts; one individual, stranded on the Essex coast, is said to have measured ten feet, a third of which, in accordance with the usual proportion observed between fish and snout, was blade; this, however, is small as compared with other recorded specimens elsewhere; several naturalists speak of large Mediterranean spadas, weighing four hundred pounds, and measuring from twelve to fourteen feet, and Cuvier supposes eighteen or twenty feet not to be at all beyond their known powers of development. Spadas, however, of such a size are very rare, from four to six feet being the usual run of those taken off the Trinacrian coast and displayed in the fish-markets of Sicily. The flesh, which is much esteemed by the better classes at Palermo, is dressed in almost as many modes as that of the thunny, and fetches a higher price: during our sojourn there it was as two to one, the price of the first averaging fourpence per rotolo, while the *προτομαὶ* of the latter were disposed of at twopence or twopence-halfpenny. The fibre is invitingly white, and the round segments look, as they lie in rows along the stalls, just like so many fillets of veal, to which meat they bear some resemblance also at table.

The weapon of the sword-fish being very destructive to nets, the harpoon has always been a favourite method for capturing large specimens. Oppian records that the sailors of the Tyrrhine Sea constructed with this view certain light skiffs, built to resemble xiphias, which these dull fish, mistaking for so many new acquaintance of their own species, approach in foolish confidence, and not perceiving the mistake till it is too late to retreat, allow themselves to be surrounded, and shortly afterwards despatched by the harpooners who scull the canoes.

> To fishy form, th' artistic builders lend
> Mimetic fins, and wooden sword protend.

With social joy each xiphias views his friends,
And kindly instincts aid man's treacherous ends.
Anon the crafty boatmen, closing round,
The trident hurl and deal the deadly wound.
The goaded fish, experience bought too late,
Escapes, but oft still battles hard with fate;
Unvanquish'd, summons to his instant aid
The oft-tried prowess of his trusty blade;
Selects some boat and runs his puissant sword
Full many an inch within the fatal board.
There held no more, the doughty weapon yields,
And crimsons with his blood the briny fields.

If all this be true, we cannot but assent to what the same poet has elsewhere written touching the xiphias' want of 'nous.'

Nature her bounty to his mouth confined;
Gave him a sword, but left unarm'd his mind.

A common mode of taking the sword-fish in Sicily with the harpoon, similar in general plan to that we have translated above, is in substance thus described by Brydone:—'A scout, mounted on the mast of a vessel, notifies to his comrades the first glimpse he obtains of the spada; the fishermen (a particularly superstitious class in Sicily) commence forthwith a measured chant,* which they are taught to consider as an indispensable preliminary to success. When the spada, allured by the ditty, has come sufficiently near the boat to be reached by a missive, the most skilful harpooner throws his weapon, attached to a long coil of cord, and seldom fails to

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* Brydone thinks, in Greek, but more probably in the classic *patois* of their country, in which there are said to be many works of merit, both original and translations; one of the latter in particular, a Theocritus in verse, was highly recommended to us by several Sicilians together, who seemed to forget, in their national enthusiasm, that we could not, had we purchased a copy as they recommended, have understood a word of it.

strike and secure the fish, even though at some distance. This Siren song (the only lure ever employed on these occasions) is of such efficacy, say the sailors, that the spada cannot retreat whilst it continues; but should the spell-bound victim, before he is struck with the harpoon, hear a word of Italian, that instant the spell is broken, the charm dissolved, and down he plunges into the 'vasty deep,' out of which no further callings or incantations will again evoke him.'

Pilot Fish.

Πόμπιλε ναύτῃσιν πέμπων πλόον εὔπλοον ἰχθὺς
πομπεύσας πρύμναθεν ἐμὰν ἀδεῖαν ἑταίραν.

The *naucrates ductor*, and *pompilus* of the ancients, rarely exceeds a foot in length; it is placed by Pliny among the thunnies, and Athenæus further describes it as striped (*ποίκιλος*), and like a pelamys; points of resemblance which, connected with its singular habit of following ships, completely identify this fish with the modern 'pilot.' The practice of these sea *relturini* is to attach themselves to some outward-bound ship, and to follow pertinaciously in her wake, even on the longest voyages, and for months together, till she arrives at the destined port, when they hold themselves in instant readiness for a new engagement. On such occasions, the little pilots, not liking, as it would seem, to encounter the dangers of the deep alone, have usually persuaded some giant fish—formerly it was the whale, and nowadays it is the shark—to accompany them: and what valuable services are performed by these pigmy Palinuri to their unwieldy associates during the voyage, are described *con amore* by Oppian, and translated, with becoming spirit, by Jones.

* * * *

Bold in the front the little pilot glides,
Averts each danger, every motion guides;

With grateful joy the willing whales attend,
Observe the leader and revere the friend:
True to the little chief obsequious roll,
And soothe in friendship's charms their savage soul.
Between the distant eyeballs of the whale
The watchful pilot waves his faithful tail,
With signs expressive points the doubtful way,
And warns to fly the snare and chase the prey:
The tail, as vocal with impressive air,
Bids him of all, but most of man, beware.
Where'er the little guardian leads the way,
The bulky tyrants doubt not to obey,
Implicit trust repose in him alone,
And hear and see with senses not their own;*
To him the important reins of life resign,
And every self-preserving care decline.

Alas for the fickleness of fish, and the inconstancy of marine as of mundane attachments! Cold water seems an element almost as ungenial to lasting friendships as *hot*, and mute creatures as capable of jealousy and resentment as loud-tongued meropic man! When, and on what grounds the misunderstanding of the pilot with his ancient 'fat friend' took place, is uncertain, as it is how long after this rupture he remained 'unattached;' but that Naucrates has, for several centuries at least, taken up with a still stranger ally, in the dreaded shark, whom he escorts in safety through every sea, is matter of general notoriety and almost daily observation. The motives which induced the pilot to transfer his care and personal service, if not his affections, to this gaunt companion (whose conduct is not liable to ill-natured surmise or inference?) have been very differently viewed. While some look upon him as his staunch ally, others consider the actions usually quoted in proof of this as

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* Κείνῳ δὲ δέδορκεν
ἧνι' ἐπιτρέψας σφετέρου βιότοιο φυλάσσειν.

highly suspicious, and, occasionally, wholly at variance with any such notion. M. Geoffroy is disposed to put a charitable construction on the pilot's proceedings, and imagines, for the solution of them, a species of *squalomania*, inducing him to make the same tender of services now to the shark as whilom to the whale, giving, and vouching for the accuracy of, a story which he thinks irrefragably establishes the point. The story, which may be told in few words, is this: two pilots, on trustworthy authority, were distinctly observed to lead a squalus up to a bait hung out for his destruction, and, by their importunity and pressing, finally induce him to seize it. On which M. Cuvier shrewdly remarks, that such a recital, so far from proving what Geoffroy intends to establish, in fact proves the very opposite, and, if true in its details, would render the name of 'traitors,' and not 'pilots,' the appropriate name for these fish. On the other hand, we certainly meet with anecdotes which, supposing them correct, appear to countenance the notion that, at times at least, the N. ductor really protects his grim and ferocious confederate. Captain Richards once saw a blue shark following his ship in the Mediterranean, accompanied by several pilots. A tempting bait was thrown out by the sailors, but the manœuvres of the crew to catch Glaucus were for some time rendered completely abortive by the pertinacity with which these little attendants alternately came forward and perseveringly poked their snouts in the way, so as effectually to keep him off from the snare. After awhile, these reiterated warnings seemed to be successful, the shark swimming away with his faithful train, as by mutual consent, in another direction; and soon all that could be seen of the strange party, by the disappointed watchers on the taffrail, was the long back-fin of their intended victim, moving just above the rippling waves. Suddenly, however, as changing his mind, the shark turned round,

and like a dog scenting game rushed forwards, distanced the careful escort, and, before his little friends could again interpose or come to the rescue, had swallowed the enticing *bonne bouche*, and become irretrievably hooked. The poor pilots continued, for some time after the stiff cartilaginous corsair had been hauled on board, to follow the dead body bewailing his fate, and their own self-imposed duties and 'love's labour lost.' To our mind, the most curious circumstance in such relations, is the immunity enjoyed by these small fish; but M. Lacépède attributes this in part to great agility in keeping out of harm's way, but principally to the utter worthlessness of the pilot's flesh, which seems, as an aliment, to be equally despised by marine as by land gluttons. 'Ce poisson n'existerait plus depuis longtemps s'il n'avait reçu l'agilité en partage; il se soustrait par ses mouvements rapides au danger qui peut le menacer;* d'ailleurs, sa petitesse fait sa sûreté et compense sa faiblesse; il n'est recherché ni par les pêcheurs ni par les grands habitans des mers; l'exiguité de ses membres le dérobe souvent à leur vue; le peu de nourriture qu'il peut fournir empêche qu'il ne soit l'objet des désirs des marins ou les appétits des squales: il en résulte pour ce poisson cette sorte de sécurité qui dédommage les faibles de tant de privations.' And again:—'Pressé par la faim, elle ne fuit ni le voisinage des vaisseaux ni même la présence des squales, ou des autres tyrans des mers; elle s'en approche sans défiance et sans crainte; elle joue au devant des bâtimens ou au milieu des terribles poissons qui le *dédaignent*, et trouve dans les aliments corrompus que l'on rejette des navires, ou dans les restes des victimes immolées par les féroces requins, des fragmens appropriés par leur ténuité à la petitesse de ses organes.'

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* M. Bosc also relates that the pilot is always observed to keep at a safe distance from the shark.

Lacépède, who repudiates the notion of the sagacity usually attributed to these pilots, observes, with reference to romantic relations in natural history generally, that the accurate naturalist is as much bound to point out such quicksands of the understanding, as the hydrographer in his chart to mark those other *syrtes* where vessels have been known to founder. Why pilots follow ships, if not for the sake of the shark's company, is mysterious, and has given rise accordingly to many strange fancies. Some suppose it is to gratify a social instinct, as when a dog escorts a gay barouche, and seems to say to the high-mettled roadsters, as he leaps up to salute them,—

> Say, shall my little *bark* attendant sail,
> Pursue your triumph and partake the gale.

Others, again, view it as a mere instance of cupboard love, and for what may be thrown overboard; this is the more probable conjecture, as the pilot has often been observed to forsake the shark for some strong-scented offal cast upon the waters, leaving him wholly unprotected till the carrion has been gorged.

The Caranx.

The caranx trachurus (bastard-mackerel) probably corresponds with the individual so called by Oppian and Athenæus. It abounds in the Mediterranean, and is a dry coarse fish, fit only for hungry boatmen and panichthyophagous puss. The entrails, however, enjoyed a great reputation at Constantinople in the days of Belon; and at Rome, where much inferior fish still finds a ready market during Lent, and on other *maigre* days, this caranx is often seen, heard, and smelt, sputtering in rancid grease, at street-stalls, or served at third-rate *osterie cucinanti*, in a pickle of strong saffron vinegar. Formerly, it used to be caught in a species of night-nets,

called *κύρτοι*,* smelling of myrrh, and containing a savoury bait.

> A paste in luscious wine the captor steeps,
> Mix'd with the balmy tears that Myrrha† weeps;
> Around the trap diffusive fragrance rolls,
> And calls with certain charms the caranx shoals;
> They crowd the arch, and soon each joyful swain
> Finds nor his labour nor his care in vain.‡

The Dory.

Ne nos alienigeni piscis delectant, nec enim omnibus muri potest omnis esse; ut Atlantico fabor, qui et in nostro Gallium municipio generosissimis piscibus abundat: cum primum conspectudine Zeum appellamus.—*Colum. de Re Rustica.*

John Dory, as we write the supposed name and surname of this scombrian at present, has so Anglican a sound, that with many it passes for genuine English, and it is alleged, in corroboration of this notion, that John Quin, whose partiality for the fish is well known, bequeathed the first monosyllable of the illustrious two to the Dory, which became in consequence John Dory, or John's dory, ever afterwards,—but this is a mistake; the name, however English in sound, or, as now written, in look, is certainly foreign, and derived either from the French or Italian. If French originally, it may be a corruption of *jaune doré*, golden yellow, which gives a correct notion of the hue of the fish; or dory, as it

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* These *κύρτοι*, or wicker traps, were left in the water all night, and the fish caught removed in the morning. Hence the proverb, *εὕδοντι κύρτος αἱρεῖ*—

The kurtos keeps,
Though the owner sleeps.

† *Vide*, for the tale of this Assyrian damsel's criminal passion, and her subsequent metamorphosis into the myrrh gum-tree, Oppian, 4 Hal.

‡ Opp. J. J. t.

sometimes stands, without a prefix, may be a clipt form of *adoré*; and as it was formerly consecrated to Jupiter, and is still held sacred by the Chinese, this derivation has a sort of traditional plausibility in its favour. Other etymologists, however, go further than France, and conceive John Dory to be a barbarous dismemberment and Anglican corruption of *janitore*, a name by which this fish is familiarly known at Venice and elsewhere; the origin of the term *janitore*, as applied to the dory, seems to be the following: St. Peter, represented with the triple keys 'of hell, of hades, and of heaven' in his hand, is called, in his quasi-official capacity, *il janitore*, and this fish, sharing with the haddock the apocryphal honour of having received the apostle's thumb-mark (which has been ever since as indelibly branded on its posterity as the blood upon Bluebeard's key), is called in consequence St. Peter's fish,* and by metonymy, *il janitore*. The ancient Greek name for the dory, as we learn from Columella, was *Zeus*, Jupiter; and it may be that the Roman Church, fond ever of transferring the thunderer's honours to their patron saint (witness how his pagan toe has been worn away by fervent lips doing homage in their hearts to Cephas), has canonized this fish to remove all conscientious scruples, and to render it as safe, as it is a savoury diet, for the fasts of the faithful. The Latin word for dory is *faber*; it was supposed to be so designated in consequence of the miniature resemblance of many of the bones of the head to the tools used in a smithy; Gesner says it still passes by this name in Dal-

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* St. Peter, as much the patron saint of British fishermen and fishmongers as of Roman Pontiffs, perpetuates to this day his name and insignia amongst us, in the Peter-boats which still ply the Thames, and in the display of the cross keys (the instruments of his authority) which form a part of the armorial bearings of the Fishmongers' Company of London.

matia. Oppian calls it, perhaps from its bronze colour, χαλκεὺς, the coppersmith. There are various other vernacular aliases along the shores of the Mediterranean, by which the dory is popularly known; such as *cetola*, or sea-pig, from the erectile bristles which project from the back and head; *gallo di mare*, the marine cock, for the same reason; and *rota*, or wheel-fish, from the rounded form of the body. Another saint too besides the apostle, St. Christopher, has lent his name to the dory; and the same 'irrupta copula' associates the portraits of the twain with this fish, as unites, in different prints, St. Roche with his dog, St. Anthony with his pig; or, on the Tarentine drachma, Arion and the dolphin.

The dory is of too greedy a temperament to like the short commons occasionally imposed upon the members of those overgrown communities called shoals; he lives therefore very much to himself, frequenting such rocky sites as afford a safe retreat and an abundant supply of small fish. Though flat in form, as a turbot, sole, or plaice, Zeus does not belong to the same family; he swims erect, and both surfaces being thus equally exposed to the light, are alike of a coppery hue; he has, moreover, like the generality of fish, an eye on each side of the head; while turbot and other flat-fish have them, as we shall see, both on the same side, and, swimming only on one flank, the opposite in consequence becomes etiolated or blanched.

Dories have always enjoyed a good reputation among connoisseurs in fish; the Mediterranean possesses perhaps few better species; the finest specimens, however, do not occur in the waters of this sea, but in those of the Atlantic, as all the world is at present agreed, and as Columella knew long ago, for he recommends in particular to his countrymen those that were taken off the coast of Cadiz. In the Bay of Biscay, where they grow to a larger size, specimens often occur of ten and twelve

pounds weight: we never saw any in an Italian market heavier than two rotoli and a half, or about five pounds, and seldom any so large. There is a huge African fish of the dory kind, which has been known to avoirdupoise one hundred and forty pounds; but of the culinary merits of this *lamprys guttatus* (the *ophah* of Pennant) nothing has transpired; to judge from its size alone, one would fancy it must be coarse eating.

The correct way to dress dories is simply to boil them; unless when small they are seldom fried; a large one may occasionally be stewed, but boiling is decidedly the prevailing method of dealing with them both at home and abroad. In Italy, equal parts of wine and water are used in the cooking; and 'John' is usually served cold, with a sauce of lemon-juice and oil, and a sprinkling of salt and pepper. Quin, whose passion for this dish amounted to a *resania*, or slight delirium, preferred dories dressed in sea-water to any other way, and he once took the then fatiguing journey from Bath to Plymouth, in order to eat them there in perfection, cooked in their own element on the spot. Colonel Montague, who relates the Drury-lane 'rake's progress,' mentions that Quin stopped on his way down at the Ivy-bridge hotel, on purpose to concert measures with the landlord for prolonging his dory feasts for another day (professional engagements allowing only a week's absence), by having some in readiness for him on his return. The appointed time arrived, and Quin made his punctual appearance with a cask of sea-water as his *compagnon de voyage*; but the weather, or something else, had been unpropitious; no dories were in waiting for the actor's dinner; there might have been other fish in the larder as well as ducks in the pond, but he was not a man to listen to alternatives on so trying an occasion; in vain the host sought to compromise the matter, the landlady to flatter and soothe the stomach of the irritated comedian, who flung the now useless cask

out of the chaise in high melodramatic dudgeon, refused to alight, slammed the chaise door, and ordered the wondering post-boys to drive on!

The Coryphæna, or Dorado.

One ancient name for the coryphæna was *hippurus*: the motive for which designation, as applied to this fish, is beyond safe conjecture: that of coryphæna, occurring in Athenæus, seems to be derived from *κορυφὴ*, the head; this fish being remarkable for the elevation and prominent summit of that organ. Linnæus has incorporated these two ancient names (supposed for the same fish), making the first generic, the second specific. 'The coryphæna hippurus swims with great rapidity, is of large size, silvery blue above, with spots of deep blue and citron-yellow underneath.'* There are several species. It is only as the enemy of the flying-fish that this *chasseur* has attained any celebrity, the flesh of the dorado being of no value. It inhabits the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean.

Tænioides, Riband Fish.†

Leaving the Mackerel family, we come next to that of the Tænioides, or riband-fish, a small group, which, though it presents two or three individuals remarkable for their beauty, is not found recorded in the extant writings of any ancient author. The *cepola rubescens*, or onion-fish, whose body peels into flakes like that bulb, and who zigzags through the waves like a leech; the delicate soft trachypteris,—*pesce bannera*, or banner-fish, of the Neapolitan markets; and that beautiful creature, the lepidopus argyreus, all belong to this family. The last-mentioned has been excellently described, in one of their

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* Cuvier. † Family VIII.

appendixes, by the translators of the ninth volume of Cuvier's 'Règne Animal :'—'If we figure to ourselves a large broad riband of silver, swimming in undulations and sending forth in its motions beautiful reflections of light, we shall have an idea of the effect produced by the lepidopus argyreus whilst living in the waters of the sea.' The length of this splendid species is sometimes not less than five feet; and had it been known to the salt-water poets of either Greece or Latium, they could hardly, we think, have failed to celebrate its beauty in their descriptive and harmonious verse. It seems, however, to be quite a recent addition to the long list of modern Mediterranean eurekas, one of the many discoveries which attests the truth of the adage, that more things live in the sea than will ever come out of it; and that what Gray sings of ocean gems is equally applicable to ocean fish.

CHAPTER XIII.

LABYRINTHIFORM PILARYNGEALS, OR CAMEL FISH.

OF the next, or ninth exotic family, of Surgeon fish, Theutyes (all of whom are addicted to a vegetable diet, and some, in justification of the name, carry lancets in their tails to bleed the unwary,) as they were apparently unknown to the ancients, we have nothing to communicate, but shall pause to say a few words on certain members of the more generally interesting group, the tenth family of Labyrinthiform Pharyngeals.

All the world is more or less familiar with the forms of various fossil fish, having seen them exhibited, either in bony skeleton; or Niobe-like, converted into stone; or intaglioed in a calcareous matrix; or presenting a daguerreotype outline in silex, the mere shade of what they once were. Most of the specimens, when in a fit condition for diagnosis, are traceable to known species, and are found to belong, in by far the majority of instances, to that grand ichthyological section called *abdominal*, of which the leading characteristic is to have the belly-fins suspended behind the pectorals or side-fins. A large part of Europe teems with these singular productions, and it seems by no means improbable, from the great number of already ascertained habitats, that the whole contour of the earth's crust may conceal, at different depths, vast stores of potted ichthyolites. The yield however of the several mines containing these subterranean treasures is extremely variable: in some instances specimens of one or two genera only turn up; in others the number is

greater, whilst in others again the list of findings is very considerable. Monte Bolca, in the Veronese territory, is a real Potosi for this kind of wealth; and from its teeming flanks naturalists continue to draw apparently exhaustless supplies of fishy deposits placed in these 'old established *banks*' (which have never stopped payment) who knows how many centuries ago? This, unlike some other parturient mountains, in place of producing its mouse, contains in one vast promiscuous womb more than forty varieties of fish, very dissimilar in habit, form, size, and physiology. Here in strange jumble lie the relics of creatures the most pacific and the most turbulent in disposition; the several osteologies of inoffensive gurnards, perch, mackerel, balloon fish, mugils and dorys, commingled with those of the implacable shark and fierce colossal skate: here, long since, bone laid to bone, and tusk to tusk, the wicked have ceased to trouble, and the weary been at rest. Thus the vast interior of some old monkish mausoleum of a library often presents to view an equally strange collection of ill-assorting 'corpuses;' the literary 'remains' of twice defunct divines, formed now into a stratified mass of many thousand fossilized folios, extending tier above tier, 'all up to the ceiling, quite down to the ground,' and stretching away far as the eye can penetrate the gloom, in long receding rows of mummified calf. Here the fiercest sharks that ever stirred the bitter waters of polemic divinity, though separated all life through by hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, or only brought together to wrangle; having fought *their* fight and maintained *their* faith to the last, are united under the universal reign of death, by the labours of the spider, in one common vault;

And now, on dusty shelf, for ever laid,
Those graceless bigots slumber in their ire;
Whose hands the 'rod of controversy' sway'd,
Or fann'd with ecstasy the penal fire.

Ichthyolites occur in formations anterior to that of the limestone, in lime itself, and in more recent deposits; above all, the coarse calcareous concrete in which shells abound is said to produce the largest supply. Volcanic Italy teems with these curiosities, and we remember with regret an opportunity we once had and lost, during a summer's sojourn at Vico, in the Bay of Naples, when the road between Sorrento and Castellamare was being widened, of purchasing many fine specimens at a very small outlay.

There is, we believe, no mention made by the ancients of any such antediluvian remains. What they understood by fossil fish was quite another thing; and as many of our readers may possibly never have heard of subterranean fish *alive*, we append Theophrastus's short account of them, as the subject is one by no means devoid of interest. He seems to have been the first to draw attention to these underground prodigies, 'telling strange wonders of certaine kinds which are about Babylon, where there be many places subject to the inundations of the Euphrates and other rivers, and wherein water standeth, after that the rivers are returned within their banks, in which the fishe remaine in certaine holes and caves. Some of them (saith he) used to issue forth on land for food and releafe, going *upon their finnes in lieu of feet, and wagging their tails ever as they go*: and if any chase them, or come to take them, they will retire into their ditches aforesaid, and there make head and stand against them. They are headed like to the sea-frog (or the sea-devil), made in other parts like gudgeons and guilled in manner of other fish. Moreover, that about Heraclea and Cromna, and namely near the river Lycus, and in many other quarters of the kingdome of Pontus, there is one kind above the rest that haunteth river-sides and the utmost edge of the water, making herself holes under the bankes and within the land where

shee liveth, yea even when the bankes are drie, and the rivers gathered into narrow channels. By reason thereof they are digged forth of the earth; and, as they say that find them, alive they bee, as may appear by moving and stirring of their bodies. The same author avoucheth that in Paphlagonia there be digged out of the ground certain land fishes that be excellent good meat and most delicate, but they be found in drie places remote from the river, and whither no waters flow, whereby they are forced to make the deeper trenches for to come by them. Himself marvelleth how they should engender without the help of moisture, howbeit he supposeth there be a certain minerall and naturall feree therein, such as we see to sweat out in pits, forasmuch as divers of them have fishes found within them.'*

To this abridged report from Theophrastus may be added the no less circumstantial observations of much more recent writers on the subject, who give the weight of their authority in corroboration of what he asserts: George Fabricius, in a letter to Gesner, and George Agricola, in a treatise on subterranean animals, recapitulate similar statements, and tell the same story. Fabricius minutely describes, as belonging to this hypogean race, 'a fish about one foot in length, and one inch thick; above, deep cerulean, lighter on the under side (which is minutely marked with dark dots, as if finely pricked with a needle), and having certain oral appendages porrect when immersed, and retracted when taken from the water.' He gives two well-known localities for this fish, both in the vicinity of the Elbe, and says that the peasants dig them up in dry weather for household provision, and that in wet weather the pigs feed upon them in the fields, where they lie after the subsidence of a flood littered over the ground like worms. George

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* Holland's Pliny.

Agricola also gives the dimensions, and furnishes further details of two very distinct species of these burrowing fish, one shaped like an eel and scaleless, the other somewhat resembling a gudgeon in form and scaly, both of which, he says, are *dug* up in divers places abundantly, and furnish a poor, sorry fare to the countryfolk who disinter them; he adds that they not unfrequently penetrate far through the earth, and bore their way generally from some neighbouring stream into deep caves and wine-cellars; though at other times they are exhumed in parts sufficiently remote from all running water to make their *gille* or genesis equally hopeless problems. Both authors concur in the belief that these fish live only whilst they are buried, and die (unless the necessary precautions be taken) on removal from the tomb: with proper care however they may, it seems, be kept, like carp or perch, a long while alive; indeed, they relate that certain chemists who exhibit these creatures to curious customers, as snakes, feed them for six months or more, suspended in glass globes, during which they not only live, but thrive and grow. Other authors may be cited in accordance with these last. Near Sefton (Lancashire), writes Camden, 'the little river Alt runs into the sea, where, in the mossy grounds about Formby, they cut out turves which serve the inhabitants both for fire and candle. Under the turf there lies a blackish dead water, which has a kind of oily fat substance floating upon it, and little fishes swimming in it, which are taken by the diggers: so that we may say we have fish dug out of the ground in England, as well as they have about Heraclea in Pontus. Nor is this strange,' he continues, 'since in watery places of this nature, the fish following the water, often swim under ground; and so men are forced to fish for them with spades.' That of Seneca was pleasantly said, 'what reason is there why fish should not travel on land, if we traverse the sea?' But a very recent account of

live fossil fish has been published by Sir Wm. Jardine: 'Fish, taken in the summer of 1835, on the shore of Macarthy's Island, about three hundred and eighty miles up the river Gambre, were found about eighteen inches below the surface of the ground, which during nine months of the year is perfectly dry and hard, the remaining three months it is under water; when dug out of the ground and put into water, the fish immediately unfold themselves and commence swimming about. They are dug up with sharp stakes and used for food.' We hardly know what conclusions the reader may be disposed to adopt from all this consentient testimony respecting these subterranean fish: that men should dig up the supposed exclusive denizens of the flood with pickaxe and spade, is certainly not what one would, *à priori*, expect; but, on the other hand, to doubt the existence of anything merely because we have not seen or cannot understand it, and to repudiate the force of very respectable evidence in the relation of mere *matter of fact* (which, if it be not *knowingly* false, must needs be true), is to carry scepticism rather too far. It recurs, too, to us, as it will doubtless also to many of our readers, that we have seen thousands of those little silvery fish, the wriggle (ammodytes), hoed out of the sand at low water, at a depth of several inches from the surface; and instances will probably be familiar to others of carp, eels, perch, or tench, extracted alive from the consolidating ooze of a waterless pond, or even discovered impacted in the boggy bottom of a ditch.* If fish, then, may thus

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* Daniel, in his 'Rural Sports,' gives an interesting case in point. 'A piece of water, which had been ordered to be filled up, and into which wood and rubbish had been thrown for years, was directed to be cleaned out. Persons were accordingly employed; and, almost choked up by weeds and mud, so little water remained that no person expected to see any fish, except a few eels; yet nearly two hundred brace of tench of all sizes, and as

exist alive, entombed in sand, ooze, or mire, the question may well be put, why, with such notorious facts before us, should we, rejecting testimony above suspicion, refuse to believe that they may also live *underground*? Here, no doubt, their origin is obscure, especially in cases where no overflowing of a river in the vicinity can have carried fecundated spawn to be subsequently hatched *sub dio*. yet even here the mystery is not greater (nor on that account to be gainsaid) than the origin of those scaly creatures which regularly make their appearance after the rainy season* in the East, converting the arid cis-

many perch, were found. After the pond was thought to be quite free, under some roots there seemed to be an animal, which was conjectured to be an otter. The place was surrounded, and on opening an entrance among the roots, a *tench* was found, of most singular form, having literally assumed the shape of the hole in which, of course, he had been for many years confined. He weighed eleven pounds nine ounces: his colour was singular, his belly being that of ochre or vermilion. This extraordinary fish, after having been inspected by many gentlemen, was carefully put into a pond, and at the time the account was written, twelve **months afterwards, was alive and well.'**

* Phanias says that it rained fish for three days in Chersonesus.—Phylarchus, that showers of fish, wheat, and frogs, were not unusual. Heraclides of Lemnos speaks of a ranary rain (the basis of which seems founded on one of the plagues of Egypt) which fell in such cataracts from the sky in Paeonia and Dardania, that they filled alike the public streets and private dwelling-houses: the first day the inhabitants bore the plague as they might, killing the croakers as fast as they could, and carefully shutting them out-of-doors: but when the rain ceased, and the frogs no longer fell, they then began to multiply and increase, till every place swarmed and was covered with them: all the beds were filled with frogs, which also squatted on the chairs, and sprawled upon all the settees and sofas. At table, boiled frogs were found in the tureen and stewed frogs under the covers of the side-dishes, whilst frogs, scalded or lame, limped and leapt across the dishes into everybody's lap. The inhabitants bore all this with fortitude and resignation for some time, till at length, finding they could not put foot to the ground without treading upon, nor bit into their

terns on the house-tops of Calcutta, and elsewhere, which have been for many weeks without a drop of water, into vivaria swarming with small glistening inmates of from two to three inches long, supposed to have fallen from the clouds.* It is rare indeed to meet with an Indian who has not fallen in with showers of these rain-fish,† and who will not fall out with you if you doubt it. A thousand citizens, both of credit and renown, in London, and as many men of metal and moustache at Cheltenham and Harrowgate, are ready to vouch that the clouds which burst periodically over the parched earth in that country, 'drop' not only 'fatness' into her furrows, but abundance of fish as well; and one of the most notable of these offspring of the clouds is a little creature known to modern naturalists as the anabas testudineus! The chief peculiarity of the small group to which it belongs (the tenth, or Labyrinthiform Pharyngeal family) is the division of the superior pharyngeals into thin laminæ, more or less numerous, forming intercepting cells, in which water can remain, and flow upon and moisten the gills when these fish are upon dry land. Anabas seems at first sight an extraordinary name for a creature said to descend from the clouds, but the appellation has exclusive reference to

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mouths without eating frogs; and that the stench proceeding from myriads of these creatures, which everywhere strewed the ground, had become intolerably pestiferous and offensive: *ἔφυγον τὴν χώραν*, they quitted the district, and left the 'hoarse nation of marauders' in undisputed possession of the land.

* *Vide* a short notice of these fish, in 'Annals of Philosophy,' vol. viii.

† Polybius, quoted by Strabo, says 'these rain-fish leap on land like frogs; also that on the subsidence of the waters they retire underground to gnaw the grass-roots, of which they are very fond, *φιλησοῦσι γὰρ τῆ τῆς ἀγρώστιος ῥίζη*, so that they must be as troublesome to crops as wire-worms and rodentiary insects.

another not less singular trait in the natural history of this fish, viz. a propensity to ascend trees. Mr. Daldorf, a Dane, relates that he actually saw one of these creatures making an *anabasis* up a palm-tree, which it climbed by hooking its spinous gill-flaps into the inequalities of the bark, and then pushing the body in advance by bending its tail. Having studied the small climber's plan of ascent for some time, he ultimately removed it from the tree at the height of six feet: the accuracy of this relation, resting, as supposed, upon the testimony of a single pair of eyes, was said to be not only inconclusive, but highly questionable, inasmuch as many other pairs equally conversant with the anabas had failed to make any such observation: but this objection is neither fair in its inference, nor quite correct in its statement. Mr. Thoms, another Dane, has put his eyes at the service of his countrymen, as vouchers for all Mr. Daldorf saw; and, not to urge the obvious difficulty of detecting so diminutive a climber in a tree at all (rendered no doubt more cautious in his proceedings from being the known subject of unpleasant remark), it may be inquired, if this fish had not the notorious habit attested by these two Danes, whence comes its Tamul name *ponciri*, which is, we are told, being interpreted, '*one that climbs trees*'? The generation of this fish is involved in much mystery, if their actual descent be not from the clouds.

Whatever doubts may be entertained of the anabas's first fall and subsequent rise, all observers agree that it takes occasionally very long land-journeys of its own accord; and that it is not unfrequently made to perform even longer, being carried, dry, some hundred and fifty miles across the country to the markets of Calcutta, where it is sought for by the natives, either as food or for purposes of amusement. Jugglers carry them about for exhibition, and children love to watch them crawling

on the ground by means of the sharp fins, which serve them in lieu of feet; thus these anabases set that Greek adage at defiance, which says, *θαλάττιος ἐὼν μήποτε χερσαῖος γένῃ*, 'let him that is of the water remain in the water.' The ophiocephalus, another subgenus of these camel-fish, have scaly heads like serpents, and alone, of fish, no spinous rays to support the fins. Several species have been noticed. Of one of these, called *barca*, Mr. Buchanan observes that it lives in holes excavated in the vertical banks of the Bramapoutra, and only puts forth its head while on the watch for prey. This barca he describes as a disagreeable creature to look at, in spite of its pleasing colours. Unlike the anabas, which is always a very small fish, the barca attains sometimes five feet in length: it is considered as delicate food, and when intended for table, is cut up into segments, which are only marketable while they writhe.

To this family belongs the celebrated *gourami*, which is still more highly prized by adepts in gastronomy than even mullet or turbot. Commerson testifies—and a Frenchman's taste may be implicitly relied on here—that he never partook of anything more exquisite in the way of fish, whether derived from the sea or from fresh water; he adds, that the Dutch in Bavaria rear them in large earthen vessels, renewing the water daily, and feeding them entirely on fresh-water plants, of which *pistia natans* is the chief.

The interest attaching to these curious creatures, from their wonderful structure and not less singular habits, is enhanced by the fact that they were quite as well and accurately known by ancient observers as, after many ages of oblivion, they have again become, within the period of the last fifty years. Theophrastus enters into such details relative to some members of the group, that there seems little danger of mistake in applying them to

several species of well-known Indian fish. This writer appears to us to include three distinct genera in his two-fold division of 'air' and fossil fish; viz. such, first, as are amphibious; secondly, such as are confined to river-banks; and thirdly (the most wonderful of any), those that, earth-born and earth-bred, come only, worm-like, to the surface when the ground is saturated with moisture. Among these, there can be little doubt that the fish he speaks of as found about Babylon, and co-extensive with the area covered by the overflowings of Euphrates, which when the river returns to its bed 'begin to come forthe for food and releife, going upon their finnes in lieu of feet, and wagging their tails ever as they goe,' are closely allied to the Indian anabas: as little doubtful is it that those individuals which, like Mr. Buchanan's barca, make their 'holes in the banks of rivers, burrowing deep when they are dry, and coming forth from their hiding-places as do serpents,' must be members of the modern subgenus ophiocephalus, or snake-heads; and the existence of the third race of fish, eaten by the Paphlagonians, who disinter them at great depths, and far from any spring of water, is, as we have seen, vouched for by too many respectable writers to be any longer doubted.

Mugils.

> Ὀπταλέος δ' εἰσῆλθε πελώριος ἱππότα κεστρεύς·
> οὐκ οἷος, ἅμα τῷ γε δυώδεκα σαργοὶ ἕποντο.
>
> *Matron. Parod.*

As the Mediterranean has its red, it has a so-called grey mullet of its own, the mugil cephalus, which is the largest and finest of many species; the fish frequently served at Italian *tables d'hôte* under the names ramado (Nice), cefalù capuzzone (Naples), is our common grey mullet, the mugil capito of Cuvier. This ramado seldom reaches much above half the usual weight of a full-grown

mugil cephalus, varying in fine specimens from four to six pounds, whilst the weight of the full-grown 'cefalo' is ordinarily from ten to twelve pounds.

The name of mugil is derived by many etymologists from multo agilis,* and whatever may be thought of the derivation, these words certainly express correctly enough the fitful agility and fleetness which belongs to the whole tribe; for though one only is designated saltator, all the 'seet' are equally entitled to the denomination of 'jumpers.' The heights to which they have been known to spring in escaping from a net would do no discredit to a young salmon practising somersets; but no wonder, for they are practising leaping all their lives; the disposition is so strongly innate, according to Mr. Crouch, that 'a young mugil of very tiny dimensions may be seen tumbling head over tail in the active endeavour to pass a line: I have even known, he says, one less than an inch long throw itself repeatedly over the side of a cup in which the water was an inch below the brim: they too look out for other means of escape, and will rush at the largest mesh; but if that fails, they make no second effort.' Oppian, who records the well-known propensity of mugils to escape danger by 'leaping over the wall,' relates also that if foiled in a first they do not make another attempt, but give themselves up for lost without further effort:

> The mugil, soon as circling seines enclose,
> The fatal threads and treacherous bosom knows:
> Instant he rallies all his vigorous powers,
> And faithful aid of every nerve implores;
> O'er battlements of cork up-darting flies,
> And finds from air th' escape that sea denies.

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* Columella calls them 'greges inertis mugilis'—the inert tribe of mugils; but this phrase, to be correct, must refer to their moral character, not their physical capabilities; they are naturally indolent, but once roused by a sense of near danger, fear makes them fleet and claps wings to their tails.

But should his first attempt his hopes deceive,
And fatal space th' imprison'd fall receive,
Exhausted strength no second leap supplies;
Self-doom'd to death the prostrate victim lies,
Resign'd with painful expectation waits,
Till thinner element completes his fates.*

Thus brute instinct, like the legal code of the Medes and Persians, changes not; human reason, like that of Great Britain, changes to improve. Modern mugils continue to leap for life as their predecessors did from the earliest times; but they might now as well let it alone, all their *caudæurres* ending only in catching themselves, in place of waiting patiently to be caught. The Neapolitan lazzaroni have hit upon two devices which inevitably secure all those that once come within sweep of the net: first, they either make a great disturbance on the surface of the water, the effect of which is to terrify the imprisoned cephali so that they do not attempt to escape; or, secondly (and this is the more common and favourite procedure), they place a floating raft of reeds round the nets, upon which the mugils, eager to escape, and attempting to leap over the enciente, fall, and are instantly taken prisoners by a patrolling crew going the round and on the look out for runaways. The fishermen of the Tiber catch them in nets moved by the stream, which may be seen revolving from below Ponte Sesto and the Ripetta, to several miles up beyond the Ponte Molle. This fish, though an alumnus of the Mediterranean, is by no means confined to the south; it abounds in several of the rivers of France; and such numbers in particular are said to flock into the Loire and the Garonne in spring as to cause their currents to run quite blue over the dense phalanx as it comes up from the sea to fatten in fresh water.

The quality of the mugil is very variable: in the open

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* John Jones, and not in his best vein.

sea it is a poor fish, but in clear running streams few are better flavoured, or enjoy a higher character at table. Being however a notorious glutton, who devours everything that comes to mouth (even to the outpourings of the drains*); the κεστρεὺς, mugil, or cefalo, under each of its several Greek, Latin, and Italian aliases, has always been eviscerated and the inside carefully scoured before cooking;† and the practice of connoisseurs has generally been to abstain entirely from such as came from doubtful localities, or from stagnant pools known to abound in reeds, or with an oozy, foul bottom. Those, therefore, from the swampy lagunes about Padua, Comacchio, and Ravenna (sites long celebrated for the fineness of their eels) have always been held cheap, and enjoyed a bad reputation; whilst those, on the other hand, which the clear wholesome waters of Abdera and ill-starred Sinope engender, have always been in favour, very early receiving, and no doubt well deserving, the lavish commendations bestowed on them in the savoury pages of the great Deipnosophist, —quem lege!

Pliny speaks of the stupid character and conduct of the mugil, who thrusts his head into the sand in the hope of escaping observation, not unfrequently losing thereby his tail whilst he is protecting his pericranium. In allusion to this known trait of mugil imbecility, there may have been in Shakspeare's day the adage, 'Dull as a

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* Mugil capito, says Crouch, is the only fish of which I am able to express my belief that it usually selects for food nothing that has life, although it sometimes swallows the common sandworm.

† We have partaken of one this summer from the Orwell, near Ipswich, weighing 12 lbs.; the lining membrane of the stomach of these mugils is dark, nearly black, the walls thick and almost gristly; the intestines are commonly buried in fat, which fishmongers do not send with them; one indeed told us he had known several families made ill in consequence of neglecting the precaution of thoroughly cleaning the inside.

mullet;' a verbal restitution which we would accordingly venture to propose, of a phrase in the immortal bard,* *rice* 'mallet,' the present reading; mallets are only dull by a dull metaphor, but the conduct of (grey) mullets, proves them to be really dull. Passing by the interesting small group of Atherines, the 'aphyes' of Aristotle, the 'non-nati' of whose teeming atoms the modern Neapolitan makes the most delicate of fish fritturas,† we come to the family of

The Gobioides,‡

Of which the blennies (so called by the Greeks from their slimy surface) form the first genus. The section blennius includes, amidst a great number of species, not a few whose peculiarities of organization render them extremely interesting: some, like vipers and sharks, bring forth their young alive; one individual has tufts like eyebrows on his head, and is called therefore the 'supercilious blenny;' another (the bl. opistognathus) is distinguished by his 'large maxillaries, prolonged into a kind of flat moustache';§ another, from a dilating crest which grows red at the nuptial season, is called bl. rubiceps, or 'red-cap;' whilst another, the bl. saliens, is famed for jumping on and off rocks. The anarrhichas lupus, a large and very interesting fish, abundant in the north, and largely consumed both fresh and salted by Icelanders, who moreover use the gall for soap and make shagreen of the hide, is also, according to Cuvier, 'nothing but

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* Henry IV. Part II.

† They were equally celebrated among the Greeks, who had a proverb, *ἴδε πῦρ ἀφύη* (the aphye sees the fire), to point out the celerity with which these black-eyed pigmies ought to be dressed. Ciccinelli, the Naples name for non-nati, is restricted to one species, whereas Aristotle's *ἀφύη* included the fry of many dissimilar fish.

‡ Family 12th.

§ Cuvier.

another blenny, minus the ventrals.' This is a very foolish community, if we take their character from Plautus, who, in 'Bacchidides,' compares them to other pudding-headed inanities, grouping together as synonyms, stulti, stolidi, fatui, fungi, bardi, *blenni*. The gobies, like the blennies, are coated with slime, but, unlike them, possess a singular disk, formed by the union of the two thoracic ventrals, which (like a boy's leathern stone-lifter) is capable of strong adhesion, either to a rock or to whatever other object the owner may choose to attach it.* One species, gobius niger, the boulereau of the French, being a well-flavoured fish, is perhaps (but as there are several species it is still but 'perhaps') the ancient Latin gobius, the *τράγος* of the Greeks, which used to be in such esteem at Rome and Venice;

> At Venice, famed for dainty dishes,
> The *gobies* rank the first of fishes,

says Martial;

> Nor doubt your throat of mullets to amerce,
> While scarce a *goby* lingers in your purse,

writes Juvenal; intending, no doubt, to teach men to be content with a small luxury when a larger was beyond their means.

Olivi relates of one species, very carefully observed by him at Venice, that the male first chooses some place where fuci abound, in order to make a nest, which he then covers with the long, floating roots of zostera, or grass-wrack; and there remains, shut up like a Chinese husband, expecting his wife's confinement; as the lady gobies arrive to deposit their interesting burdens, he fecundates all in succession, and afterwards defends his offspring with as much courage as he had shown care and

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* We have had one fasten so close as to require some force to detach it from our hand, even when out of the water.

tenderness in making provision for it. 'This fish,' says the great French naturalist Cuvier, 'I believe, after mature deliberation, to be the physeis of the ancients; the only one, according to Aristotle, which builds a nest.' The next group constitutes the thirteenth family, or

Pectorales Pediculati,

Fish so called because their carpal bones are elongated into a sort of arm which supports the pectoral fins. It is composed first of the genus Lophius, or fishing frogs; and secondly, of the genus Chironectes, creatures remarkable for a power of suddenly filling their enormous paunches with air, and of so distending themselves as to assume at will an almost orbicular shape in the water. On land, their singular fins enable them to creep almost like small quadrupeds along the ground, the peculiar position of the pectorals performing the functions of hind feet; and they can live like other amphibious fish for two or three days out of water.*

Rana, or Fishing Frog.

Turpis in littore Rana.—Mart.

Our ideas of fish generally are of a pleasing kind; and whether they be seen sporting in water, struggling in a net, or laid out for sale in a market-place, the exhibition is one which seldom fails to gratify the eye. Those tribes that are beautifully striped, banded, spotted, or marbled, or which blaze in the rich hues of gems and humming-birds, make lively demands on our admiration; and even those that have not such brilliant colouring nor characteristic markings to set off the skin, frequently glisten in the sheen of silvery scales, and are as fair and attractive in their attire as some young bride at the altar!

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* Cuvier.

Nor are colour and shining scales the only attractions these creatures can boast: their figure also is generally graceful, and suggestive of agile and rapid movement; while other kinds that are deficient in this so usual elegance of shape, often please from some peculiar quaintness of contour, or from some evident adaptation of their organization to meet a particular exigency. Even the repugnance excited by the shark does not proceed from his personal, but moral deformity; not because he is ugly to look at, but an ugly customer to have to do with. As every rule, however, has its exception, so are Sea-frogs the exception to that of the prepossessing appearance of fish in general, and Nature, elsewhere lavish of beauty and grace, has bestowed upon them nothing but deformity and disgrace; they are the bugbears and scape-goats of the deep, from which most monsters, the terror of young and the delight of grown-up children, have been constructed. No one could doubt the paternity of those open-mouthed chimeras of national nurseries—the Old Bones, Spring Devils, Befanos, Croc-Mitaines, Bric-à-Bracs, etc.—who had seen a sea-frog as prepared by the Neapolitan boatmen for a show, the inside thoroughly cleared out and eviscerated, with the mouth set wide open, and a lantern in the interior, shining through the pellucid skin: all these are in fact but tame copies of this incarnate fright. From the same fertile source also painters and poets famed for their grotesque or horrific representations—the Ariostos and the Brughels—have largely, though it may be at the moment unwittingly, drawn. Too ugly for any associate, and claiming no natural kin with any, the Iopheus swims about in bloated self-sufficiency, alone, without congener or any one legitimate family tie; wholly unlike in person, except in possessing a cartilaginous skeleton, any other member of the Chondropterygian group; the female moreover, as Aristotle has well observed, does

not bring forth her brood hatched in pouches, but from eggs. Another essential difference, too, between these sea-frogs and the sharks and rays, with which they used to be associated, is the different position of the fins. In other cartilaginous fish, these are placed far back, and serve as legs; but in the lopheus they are situated immediately under the throat, and act as *hands* for prehension and for burrowing in the sand. Nor is the position assigned by Cuvier to this fish among the Gobiidæ, founded on the above peculiarity, less unsatisfactory or forced, since all other connecting links are as deficient here as in the older arrangement. Most members of the division into which this fish is now forced are eatable; but though the Greeks (nasty fellows!) have registered the sea-frog among their prime viands, and considered the liver, especially, equal to that of the narke, and the flesh of the *belly* worthy to be served up at any banquet,—

Βάτραχον ἔνθ' ἴδῃς καὶ γάστριον αὐτοῦ σκεύασον,—

the rank and flabby carcase has found few partisans elsewhere, and Belon says its only value 'lies in whatever undigested food may be found in its inside':—'C'est un poisson moult laid à veoir, duquel on ne tient gran compte de manger si ce n'est pour esventrer et luy tirer les poissons qu'il ha encor touts en dudedans le corps.' Let the reader for a moment imagine a gigantic tadpole blown out to the size of a porpoise (sometimes indeed much larger, for Pontoppidan mentions one of twelve feet long, and several authors speak of individuals of seven feet and upwards), with an immense head, and a mouth extending on either side far beyond the width of the body, opening to view a capacious den, shagged throughout with hooked and mobile teeth, a triple tier in the upper and an equal number in the lower jaw, the palate, tongue, fauces, pharynx, and far down the throat,

glistening with a like display of ivory fangs; unfishy orbs resembling those of the 'star-gazer,'* planted high in the forehead; a scaleless skin, which is reeking, cold, and clammy; its surface from near the tail to the corners of the mouth as crawling with long, wriggling, carunculated appendages, like so many worms in agony; the flesh 'boggy' to the touch, save where it is padded out with an enormously distended liver, or just over the branchial cavity, a pantry constantly replenished with provisions; add to all this a large pair of Caliban hand-like fins planted close under the throat; a fierce, malevolent aspect, and an ungainly mode of wallowing rather than swimming through the brine,—and it will be apparent, even from this very imperfect sketch, that such a fish-scarecrow could not fail to arrest attention, even had there been no other claim to regard than his portentous ugliness. But this is by no means the case. What interested the earliest observers, and will continue to interest mankind throughout all time, is, how a creature so clumsy, sluggish, and totally unarmed, should never be taken with an empty stomach, or out of condition. The procedure by which he secures supplies has been recorded by a classic cloud of witnesses, by Aristotle, Plutarch, Pliny, Oppian, Ælian, etc. etc., who all give substantially the same account as would a Neapolitan lazzarone, should the question be put whilst he is rowing 'your excellency' across the bay, as to what he knows about the *rospe di mare*—viz. that the said sea-frog, aware of her inability to overtake, and of the effect of her ugliness in scaring away the fish on which she has a mind to feed, descends to the bottom, and there takes measures which are generally crowned with suc-

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* Called *οὐρανοσκόπος*, and *ὁ ἅγιος*, 'the holy,' by the ancients, and for a like reason now pesce-prete, the priest-fish, as the whites of his eyes look constantly heavenward.

cess. Having first scraped away the surface sand with the jugular fins before-mentioned, and hid her whole body up to the eyes, she leaves the vermicular processes to writhe and wriggle above the ooze: whether these give out any attractive odour, as Oppian conceives, or else that the mere muscular movements are themselves the attraction, is uncertain; but certain it is that shortly after these worms have begun to twist, a whole shoal of small fry may be seen covering the latent foe, and so

Awhile regardless of their doom the tiny victims play;

by degrees, however, the back processes are one by one drawn in and concealed, whilst those nearest the mouth maintain a brisker motion; and when these scaly simpletons, having sported round, and nibbled, and plucked at the treacherous threads, are meditating yet further liberties, the open sepulchre suddenly starts forward, and closes upon the unwary brood: thus the grey mullet,* whose name it derived from her nimbleness of tail, and who is the very hare of swimmers, is caught and frequently found pouched in the bag of this tardy tortoise, who but for such a *ruse* could never have tasted cefalo.

The sea-frog, as it can live longer out of water than most other fish, is said to pass some of its time on shore; Rondolet indeed once found one on land holding a fox fast by the leg—Reynard had apparently been prowling during the night in search of fowl, but inadvertently put his foot into the mouth of this fish, who, instantly closing upon, held it fast, as in a trap, till next morning, when the astonished naturalist surprised them in his early walk, and thus quite unexpectedly obtained a satisfactory answer to Plutarch's proposed inquiry, as to whether land or sea animals are the more astute; since the most cunning of land animals here was overmatched by a fish.

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* Mugil capito.

The fourteenth family, or Labridæ (so called from the extensile lips of its members), is profusely distributed throughout the waters of the Mediterranean, and includes almost all those lovely fish which render the Italian peschcrias so attractive to strangers coming from the north. Nature has not conferred on the Labri, says a French naturalist, either strength or power, but they have received, as their share of her favours, agreeable proportions, great activity of fin, and are adorned with all the colours of the rainbow:* two of the most beautiful as well as commonest species of Labridæ are the L. turdus (maravizzu) and L. julis, rejoicing at Naples in the extraordinary name 'cazzillo di re.' The Scari form a genus by themselves, and worthily fill the nook assigned to them by ichthyologists. 'Il est peu de poissons et même d'animaux qui aient été, pour les premiers peuples civilisés de l'Europe, l'objet de plus de recherches, d'attention, et d'éloges que le scare.'† This is very intelligible, as the eye and stomach alike conspired to pay it homage; it looked lovely in the fish-basket, and it was the most delectable of viands at table. According to the Greeks, to do justice to its flesh was not easy; to speak of its trail as it deserved was impossible, and to throw away even its excrement a sin: *τῶν οὐδὲ τὸ σκῶρ θεμιτὸν ἐκβάλειν.* Nor were other reasons wanting to interest the naturalist in behalf of this fish. It was, according to Aristotle, the only species that ruminated like a quadruped during the day, and slept like the higher animals at night,—

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* 'Le feu du diamant, du rubis, de la topaz, de l'émeraude, du saphir, de l'améthyste, du grenat scintille sur leurs écailles polies: il brille sur leur surface en gouttes, en croissans, en raies, en bandes, en anneaux, en ceintures, en zones, en ondes: il se mêle à l'éclat de l'or et d'argent qui y resplendit sur de grandes places, les teintes obscures, les aires pâles, et pour ainsi dire décolorées.'—*Lacépède.*

† Lacépède.

Scarus alone their folded eyelids close,
In grateful intervals of soft repose;
In some sequester'd cell removed from sight.
They doze away the dangers of the night.

If a scarus swallowed a bait, 'his friends—unlike the hares'—would flock round and liberate him by biting the line;* again, if he fell into a net, they would poke their tails through and give him a choice,—if he preferred to lay hold of it with his teeth, the friend in that case drew him through the prison-bars head-foremost; but as the *délenn* was sometimes fearful of injuring his eyes by so doing, against the twine, the ally from without would advise him to thrust his tail through, which he seized, and pulled the whole body through backwards. Supposing such relations true, Elian's inference, that though scari never read any treatise 'de amicitia,' they act like true friends, and fulfil all the sacred duties of their calling, seems indisputable.

After reading Lacépède's brilliant eulogy on the chromatic attractions of these gorgeous fish, all the world will be disposed to admit with him, 'que des teintes éblouissantes ou gracieuses, constantes ou fugitives, étendues sur de grandes places ou disséminées en traits légers, complètent un des assortimens de couleurs les plus splendides et les plus agréables à voir.' The frugal Numa would not, it seems, suffer these expensive brains of Jove† to be imported for public entertainments, intimating thereby that parsimony was agreeable to the gods. The prohibitory statute enacting this ran, as Scaliger conceived, thus:—'Piscis quei squammosi non sunt, nei polluceto, squammosos omnes praeter scarum polluceto.'

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* Plutarch.

† 'Cerebrum Jovis supremi' is Ennius's poetic paraphrase for the scarus.

CHAPTER XIV.

CYPRINIDÆ, OR CARPS.

Cyprinus Carpio (Carp).

Bulbulus, ante alios immani corpore piscis.*—*Jonius.*

ALL the preceding tribes have ranged under the ichthyologic section of Acanthopterygii, or fishes possessing spinous fins; those now to appear in type have all soft fins, and are hence called Malacopterygii, in the same scientific *patois*. The first and largest section of this order are said to be abdominal (abdominales), which may be paraphrased to mean 'those individuals whose ventrals are suspended to the under part of their abdomen, behind the pectorals, without being attached to the humeral bones.'† Under this heading will be found almost all our fresh-water acquaintance. It is distributed into five families: the first of these embraces the Cyprini, or Cyprians, a race sufficiently characterized by toothless jaws, which compels them generally to abstain from flesh, and to restrict themselves almost entirely to a vegetable diet. The common carp (cyprinus carpio) stands at the top of the list; and being now a well known and widely distributed fish, suggests a primary inquiry, whether it was also known to the ancients.

We incline to the opinion that it was, though we do

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* Carp are fond of creeping into the mud to escape cold, thus literally fulfilling a well-known Greek adage—*ψύκος φεύγοντες εἰς βόρβορον πίπτουσι.*

† Cuvier.

not think the evidence sometimes adduced in favour of this view either so strong or satisfactory as the case admits of. It has been said that since the Greeks and Romans are known to have been universally ichthyophagous, it is scarcely conceivable that so valuable and fine a fish as the carp should have escaped their jaws; but to those who have nothing further to urge in help of this conjecture, it might readily enough be replied, that the ancient Cyprinus in that case can hardly be its representative, since it is mentioned both by naturalists and gastronomers without one word of culinary commendation, or even the slightest intimation that it was ever served at table at all. Not that we entertain, however, any doubt that this familiar inmate of the ponds of Europe was really the same individual as that designated *κυπρῖνος* by Aristotle, and cyprinus by Pliny. Were any one required to point out a single feature by which carp might be readily distinguished from all other fish, he would at once fix, as most appropriate for his purpose, on that singular fleshy palate which is popularly but incorrectly known all over the world as 'carp's tongue,' and which, says Rondolet,* is so like that organ, that 'no one seeing it ever fails to recognize and to be struck with the perfect resemblance.' Now Aristotle expressly says, to the same purpose, of the cyprinus, that 'it has no tongue, but a soft fleshy palate strongly resembling one.' Other cyprini, indeed, have the same peculiarity of mouth as well, but in an inferior degree, so that the red appendage is never called after the barbel, the tench, or the loach, but always after the

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* A good judge in such matters. Rondolet was Professor of Anatomy at Montpelier, and so addicted to the science as to have conducted the autopsy of his own son; for this Rabelais cuts him up alive, keenly and cleverly, of course, but, according to the opinion of most *comparative anatomists*, unfairly.

carp,—carp's tongue; the testimony of Aristotle therefore goes far towards establishing the identity of our carp with his *κυπρῖνος*.

That these two words are synonyms is rendered further probable from the *κυπρῖνος*'s second designation, *λεπιδωτὸς*, which occurs both in Herodotus and Athenæus. The epithet scaly, applied to any member of a tribe where all are so, must be intended to point out one scaly beyond the rest; and this accords perfectly with the carp, as no fish of the same inches is more broadly squamose than he. Some other kinds, indeed—such as mugils and mullets—have, as Beckmann truly observes, large scales as well; but as they have not the fleshy palate, and are besides well-known fish, the reference of course cannot be to them. Again, though the original titular name has not in this instance, like that of some other fish, maintained its place everywhere throughout Greece, too much importance is not to be attached to the partial extinction of a title; whilst the fact recorded by Belon, that cyprinus was in his day the still recognized designation for this fish in Ætolia, is, we think, what Napoleon the Third would phrase 'a significant circumstance' in favour of the identity of the two. It is quite easy, indeed, to conceive how a fish like the one in question, never held in any esteem, and probably seldom brought to market, should come to receive, in a country so much subdivided as Greece, a vast variety of aliases (each province imposing some sobriquet of its own) till the original one was lost; but how, unless it were by regular transmission, the word *κυπρῖνος* should ever have become Ætolianized, seems quite inexplicable. The exception here really establishes the rule. The last item of evidence in favour of the ancient *κυπρῖνος* being the carp is, that the possessors of both names have obtained an equal celebrity for their fecundity: our own carp being a noted breeder; whilst the *κυπρῖνος*, accord-

ng to Oppian, spawns five, and according to Aristotle, not less than six times a year.*

The etymology of this ancient word is confessedly obscure, and many conjectures have not thrown much light upon it. Could the *κυπρῖνος*, indeed, be made out to have been, as some suppose, Venus's own fish, we need go no further for a derivation thus made to our hands; but this being only conjectural, we will for once venture on the perils of etymology, and suggest (though liable, perhaps, to be *carped* at) whether *κύπειρον* (a marshy weed), whence *κυπειρίζω* (to smell of the feculence of a marsh), may not be the real derivative for *κυπρῖνος*, one of those fish sung by the Greek poet,† whose latitat is amongst reeds, and whose favourite food is in mud? The common vernacular designations, of *burbaro*, *bulbaro*, by which carp is at present known at Mantua and in other Italian localities, serve, while they establish the propensity, to give countenance to this conjecture. The 'unde derivatur' of the modern word carp is not less obscure than that of the ancient cyprinus. Ménage (but he was a wag) shows us how we may transmute one into the other, by taking 'French leave' with the alphabet, and changing letters *ad libitum*, as we may want them,—an ingenious process, by which any word may, by a person who understands the rules of simple addition and subtraction, be prestoed into any other: thus, *κυπρῖνος*, says he, 'aliter *cuprinus*, aliter *cuprus*, aliter *cupra*, aliter *carpa*;' and then, without further difficulty, '*carpe*, *carpione*, and *carp*.' Those who object to Ménage's etymology have invented another equally strange, viz. from '*carpere*, quod [illegible] maris ore carpens

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* Πέντε δὲ *κυπρίνοισι γόναι μούνοισιν ἔασι*. So also Gianetazzio in his third Halieutic,—

Stagna lacusque
Quino implent partu et numerosa prole cyprini.

† Ἰχθὺς *ποταμίους ἐσθιόντας βόρβορον*.

parit;' and of these the reader may take his choice. The word carpa, whatever its origin may be, is a very old one, occurring first in Cassiodorus, a writer of the sixth century; long after whom, we find the words carpera and carpo used as designations for this fish by writers of the thirteenth century: the latter occurs in a legend of Cæsarius, quoted by Beckmann, where the Prince of evil, indulging in a frolic, appears in a coat of mail, having 'scales like a carpo.' The *English* form of the word does not occur in the Anglo-Saxon Dictionary of Alfric Archbishop of York, who died in 1051, but is used in Dame Berners' book on Angling, published in 1486, wherein 'carpe' is declared to be 'a dayntcous fysshe, but there ben but few in Englonde, and therefore I wryte the lesse of hym. He is an evyll fysshe to take, for he is so stronge enarmyd in the mouthe that there maye noo weke harnays hold hym.' The usually assigned period for their introduction into our country, by Leonard Mascal, of Plumstead (Sussex), in the reign of Henry the Eighth, must consequently be erroneous. The precise dates when carp were severally transported into France, Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark, and from what aboriginal stock all these different colonists sprang, are points not easily determined; as, however, they appear to thrive most in warm latitudes, and are found to dwindle remarkably in the north,* the supposition of their having a southern origin is by no means improbable. Hardy and prolific beyond most other fish, their spread, when once mankind had begun to naturalize them, was most rapid; and towards the middle of the sixteenth century there was scarce a country unacquainted with carp; in many, stews on a vast scale were stocked exclusively with cyprini, and thus an unfailing supply of orthodox diet for Lent and meagre-days was never

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* Pontoppidan.

wanting 'in larder or pond.' About this time, the Reformation having prepared the way for our emancipation from an enforced diet, and carp being left like other fish to stand or fall according to its deserts, and proving, so tried, anything but first-rate either as regards digestibility or flavour, soon became scarce in the market, and was never seen at a feast.

The C. carpio presents some physiological phenomena sufficiently remarkable to deserve particular notice. In the first place, with regard to age, we find it stated on respectable authority that they will reach two hundred years in waters, like the ponds of Lusace, congenial to their tastes.* Countless, indeed, are the sites, both at home and abroad, where some sly old cyprian attains a Nestorian longevity: almost every piece of water maintains some such traditional patriarch. Not long ago one of these hale old water-foxes was to be seen, in a parallelogram college-pond at Cambridge, who still continued to champ the green duckweed with a smack, and to flounder heavily amongst the startled water-lilies, on his veteran flank, as he used to do in our pupillary days, some twenty years back. He has seen out many a generation of bed-makers and ten-year men. The Lodge has had many a new 'caput,' and the kitchen many a new cook, since he first swam there; yet, amidst all these culinary changes, no Mason has been permitted to lay fraudulent hands upon him; his safety is supposed to be identified with the interests of the college; and thus protected by common consent from hook and every harm, want has from generation to generation been carefully met by his trusty nomenclator, a whistling gyp.†

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* Though essentially a fresh-water fish, it might probably be inured to brackish or even to salt water, since specimens have been, it is said, found in harbours.

† Since putting the above into type, we have learned with re-

With regard to size: though at home a carp of fifteen pounds is considered immense, the weight and dimensions of many foreign cyprians go far beyond this—twenty, twenty-five, and even thirty pounds, being by no means unusual counterpoises for specimens fetched from some German lakes; in Prussia, 'forty-pounders' are not unheard of; Pallas speaks of one taken in the Volga which measured five feet; Valmont de Bomare, of another served at the table of Prince Conti, at Offenburg, weighing forty-five pounds; and another monster was dragged from the Oder, near Frankfort, in 1711, of the incredible size of nine feet long by three deep, the weight of which was seventy pounds. Jovius speaks of carp in the Larian Lake (Como) of two hundred pounds, which were assailed by arrows shot from a crossbow or by harpoons with a string attached; adding, that in using these weapons it was necessary to strike the fish against the scales, otherwise they would glance off without penetrating the flesh. The tenacity of life exhibited by carp is another remarkable circumstance in their physiology: not only will they flourish for a very long term of years under favourable conditions for growth and development, but they have been not unfrequently found alive in the muddy bottom of an almost empty pond, where their bodies, potted and preserved, assume sometimes very strange forms, being gradually moulded into the shape of the hole in which they lay. Carp, properly packed in moist moss, with a mouthful of bread steeped in brandy, which is occasionally renewed *en route*, may be carried, it is said, almost to any distance in safety. In Holland they are often thus kept alive in cellars for months, and, being fed on bread

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gret that burglarious hands have carried off an *historic pike* from the Fellows' pond of the same college. May some 'ex ossibus ultor' from his ribs stick in that felon's throat for his crime!

and milk, they soon fatten surprisingly, and become fit for table. The cat-like vitality of carp has subjected them to an extraordinary mode of evisceration, unparalleled, we believe, in the history of fish.

Unfortunately for their well-being, they have large roes, which make fine caviare; a circumstance well known to the Jews of Constantinople in Belon's day, who, debarred by Levitical prohibition the use of caviare proper made from the sturgeon, were glad to find so good a legal substitute in that manufactured from this fish—a scaly, and therefore perfectly orthodox species. We do not pretend to determine whether it was to satisfy the palates of these Shylocks, that the ascertained powers of endurance in C. carpio first led to the experiment of extracting the sexual organs, or whether the Turks had practised the art before; but the results obtained by it were very remarkable. It was known long ago that pike might be opened, the belly afterwards sewed up, and the fish restored to the pond, without any material detriment to health or longevity; but Samuel Full, about eighty years ago, proceeded a step further: he cut open some male and female carp, entirely removed the milts and ovaries, and substituting pieces of felt, reunited the wounds by suture, and replaced his patients in their stew. Here he found that they not only recovered their strength, but grew rapidly; and after awhile became so obese and heavy, as to induce him to try them at table, when the flavour of these castrated fish proved superior in delicacy to carp that had never been *felted*. His observations were sent to Sir Hans Sloane, the then President of the Royal Society, by whom they were communicated to the members. The experiments were afterwards repeated on a larger scale, and with the same results.

The sexual organization of the cyprinus carpio is remarkable in several other particulars: besides males and

females, some are neuters,* and some hermaphrodites.† Renard further made the curious discovery that the milt, besides the usual animal components of hydrogen, oxygen, and azote, yielded phosphorus as well. The females, as we have already seen, are wonderfully prolific, and are soon in a condition to multiply, a three-year-old fish producing seven hundred thousand new representatives of the race in the course of the year.‡ Carp is a great lover of vegetables, and he must be a clever angler who can beguile him with any other bait.§ Salad leaves and salad seeds constitute his favourite fare, upon which he fattens quicker than upon any other aliment. Though able to sustain long fasts, a surfeit on this favourite diet sometimes proves fatal. Carp do not thrive in an over-stocked pond; like self-love, they will contrive to live upon themselves for a long time, but unlike self-love they do not grow the fatter for it. No fish is more impressionable to electric agency, and they quail under a magnet even at some inches' distance. So much in regard to cyprian physiology: in regard to its pathology, he is subject, *imprimis*, to a mossy efflorescence above,

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* Arist., Gesner. 'Amongst sterile fish (ἐπιτράγειοι ἰχθύες) of the fresh-water are the barinus and cyprinus.' Such fish are called *brehannes* in French; of which our English word *barren* sounds like a corruption.

† Bloch.

‡ The labours of Lucina may be facilitated by rubbing castoreum near the anal orifice, which seems to act like the ergot of rye similarly applied to quicken the deposition of eggs in slowly parturient hens.

§ We read in a 'British Angler,' of fifty years ago, that 'an expert fisher may angle diligently from four to six hours every day, for several days together, and not get a bite; so that carp-fishing requires *great patience*,'—and not a little folly, might be added as well. Such anglers show what they think of the value of time; and follow out the '*carpe* diem' of the poet in their own way.

and to the small-pox beneath, the scales; to worms, and internal ulcerations of the liver;* to visceral obstruction from feeding too freely on chickweed; to malignant pustules, and sympathetic carbuncles;† to a morbus pedicularis; to a slimy exudation from the eyes ending in blindness; and, according to Monsieur Comte Achard, 'à une fièvre épidémique, contagieuse, inflammatoire, putride et gangréneuse'!

The carp, though a poor fish to dine on *au natural*,

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* Aristotle asserts that fish enjoy immunity from disease. Pliny modifies Aristotle's assertion, which he maintains must be confined to epidemic affections alone. 'We do not know or read that all sortes be subject to maladies or diseases as other beasts, and even the wilde and savage; but that this or that fishe in every kind may be, it appeareth evidently in that some of them mislike, and come to be carrion-lean, whiles other of the like sorte are in good plight and exceeding fat.' Sophocles tells a different story—*ἐφῆκεν ἐλλοῖς ἰχθύσιν διαφθοράν*; and Virgil says,

> Jam maris immensi prolem, et genus omne natantum,
> Littore in extremo, ceu naufraga corpora fluctus,
> Proluit:

and their verse is more in accordance with fact than Aristotle's prose. Epidemics amongst fish are not rare; a very remarkable one occurred some twenty years ago. 'During the prevalence of the first visitation of Asiatic cholera on the continent, fish perished in vast numbers, particularly in Marienburg, a district in Prussia, where forty tons of them were buried from a single pond in Dimpenburg.[1] To quote but one other case; Cetti, after a five days' *λοιμὸς*, lost, in his ponds, upwards of a hundred carp, and almost as many eels; the pike and tench were scarcely affected: this disease occurred in winter, and only in such of the stews as had foul bottoms: it was no doubt occasioned, as he supposes, by the extrication of sulphuretted hydrogen kept from escaping by a thick sheet of ice covering the surface. Broussonet found that putting carbonate of soda into the water, even in very small quantities, was equally deleterious to carp.

† Daudibert, Nosologie des Poissons.

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[1] 'Lancet,' History of Cholera, Nov. 1831.

would prove an excellent dish served à la Walton, no doubt.

Take a carp, alive if possible, scour and rub him clean with salt and water, but scale him not; then open him, and put him, with his blood and liver, which you must save when you open him, into a small pot or kettle; then take sweet marjoram, thyme, and parsley, of each half a handful, a sprig of rosemary, and another of savory.* Bind them in two or three bundles and put them to your carp, with four or five whole onions, twenty pickled oysters, and three anchovies; then pour upon your carp as much claret wine as will cover him, and season your claret well with salt, cloves, and mace, and the rinds of oranges and lemons; that done, cover your pot, and set it on a quick fire till it be sufficiently boiled; then take out the carp and lay it with the broth on a dish, and pour upon it a quarter of a pound of the best fresh butter, melted and beaten with half-a-dozen spoonfuls of the broth, the yolks of two or three eggs, and some of the herbs shred. Garnish your dish with lemons, and so serve it up, and much good may it do you!

Some buy only the head, for the sake of 'the false tongue,' which enjoys a special reputation as a delicacy, and also for being, according to Aldrovandi, decidedly aphrodisiac; 'vim augendæ Veneris habet,' as he has convinced himself, he says, are also the tongues of tench and ducks. For ourself, we should think them all equally innocent of producing any such effects. Cyprinus' bile (a green colour used by painters) was formerly employed in medicine, but for what particular diseases we do not remember to have read.

Cyprinus Auratus.

There are many distinct species of carp besides the cyprinus carpio, but amongst the number none are more deserving of a brief notice than those lovely little Ori-

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* This is done to your hand at Naples, where a fasciculus of pot-herbs, ready mixed for the fish-stew, can be bought in the market.

entals which embellish the tazzas of our gardens, and the ornamental glass globes of our drawing-rooms and conservatories—the cyprinus auratus, or gold-fish. These sportive 'Chineses' found their way to England a long while ago,* though they are said to have been 'unknown in France till the days of Madame de Pompadour, to propitiate whom they were originally sent as a present.' Whatever may have been the date of their first introduction, the subsequent destiny of these two Cyprians has proved very different. The Pompadour's reign of beauty was soon over, but her lubric rivals have maintained the breed, spread their conquests into distant lands, and secured to themselves hosts of admirers in every part of the civilized world. They are not, however, perfect beauties by any means: in symmetry of form they must yield the palm to 'the silvery bleak,' 'darting dace,' and other leuciscі (to which they are next of kin), whilst not a few labour also under various personal defects, such as lame fins and goggle-eyes; or else have the mouth and sometimes the whole body screwed to one side; yet, in spite of these and other not infrequent blemishes, no fish upon the whole can surpass, and few compete with them, in brilliancy of colouring or in general attractiveness. The varieties of hue assumed by the cyprinus auratus in passing through the different stages of development to full growth are endless. At first it is of a dark sooty colour, nor is the splendid panoply perfected till more than a year has rolled over his head; the coming change is first indicated by the appearance of small silvery points, dispersed here and there over the scales, which spreading and deepening at the same time, at length encase the entire body in a spangled robe of glittering gold. As the

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* In the year 1611, says the accomplished translator of Cuvier; in 1691, says our edition of Buffon: the reader must adopt his own date.

fish approaches the term of existence it loses its brilliancy, and having no Betty at hand to supply the deficiencies of expiring nature by art, dies bleached in body, and with achromatic cheeks.

Those of its members who pass their lives in the perpetual circumnavigation of a glass globe require a renewed ocean for the pastime in winter not less than once a week, and oftener in summer, together with daily 'provisions de bouche' for the voyage, of which insects, worms, hard-boiled eggs chopped fine, and bread-crumbs, form the chief store. In such situations they seldom grow, or show much vivacity; but in ponds, where their natural victuals abound, and there is plenty of room to stretch, specimens not unfrequently occur of from twelve to fifteen inches long, and nothing can exceed the little creatures' sportiveness, provided always the temperature be as congenial to them as the site. We have frequently watched the evolutions of a large shoal kept in the basin of the scrubby park at Brussels (of which they form the only ornament), the whole corps in close pursuit after some delinquent member, whose tail first one and then another seized on and bit with boneless gums, all apparently equally eager to hunt him down, and secure the *brush*.

These fish have so delicate a perception of sound that they are capable of being attracted like the common carp to a particular spot by a whistle, or some other familiar sound. It is thus that the inhabitants of the 'Kiang' are said to summon them to dinner; but as they are known to turn faint, and sometimes even to die in a thunder-storm when the peals are reiterated and loud, what must their feelings be when each Chinese proprietor (whose fish-pond is generally contiguous to his dwelling) rends the air with the discordant banging of gongs. To atone for this *fracas* occasioned by their masters, they are made the special pets of their Chinese mis-

tresses, 'qui sont plus sédentaires que les autres dames,'* and therefore have plenty of time to devote to them.

A frittura of gold-fish has not, that we are aware, been attempted even in Italy; they would no doubt be as insipid as other small carp, and so the mediocrity of their flesh protects them in spite of the golden scales which invest it.

Cyprinus Barbatus (Barbel).†

Of the barbels of ancient Greece no records are extant; in modern Greece they are, or were in Belon's day, known as 'musticata,' a calling obviously derived from *μύσταξ*, mustax, which in Theocritus means 'beard on the upper lip' (hence moustache), and applied to barbel, the fish with the moustache. The old Latin name barbus, employed by Ausonius, as well as all its present European designations, point to the same peculiarity, viz. a beard of barbels hanging from the superior jaw.

This is a widely distributed fish, which thrives in some situations especially, and continues to multiply in spite of every destructive engine employed against it. Alberti says that from ten to twelve waggon-loads are annually taken out of the Danube during the autumnal equinox by the hand alone. 'In some localities favourable to their growth, barbel will reach a length of ten feet.'‡ These must be very old fish, which according to Ausonius renders them more acceptable at table:

Tu melior pejore ævo.

The Insubrians, however, say no barbel is fit for food:—

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* Lacépède.

† The barbel forms, on 'Coat of Bar,' one of the four quarterings of Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. (Yarrell), so that a sort of historic interest attaches to this fish.

‡ Cuvier.

Nor hot, nor cold,
Nor young, nor old;

and this prejudice seems to be generally adopted at home; witness the constant practice of those numerous anglers who grab each liquid foot of Thames from Putney-bridge to Twickenham, and hold all else fish that takes the bait; but when (as sometimes happens even to the clumsiest) they haul a noble barbel from the water, having, with a view both to immortalize themselves and encourage others, weighed, registered, and frescoed his full-length portrait on the walls of the inn, they give up the carcase to the landlord's cat, to divide with her feline friends as she pleases,

And who, as to tasting what each takes a pride in,
Would as soon think of eating the pan it was fried in!

Yet the barbel is not everywhere held so cheap, nor was it always thus despised at home: in Elizabeth's day they were in sufficient repute to be protected by statute law: amongst the piscatory restrictions of her reign, it is enacted that any one taking barbel less than twelve inches shall 'pay twenty shillings, and give up the fish so wrongfully taken, and the net or engine so wrongfully used;' and, again, by another enactment, 'whoever, fishing in the Severn, makes use of any engine or device, whereby salmon, trout, or barbel be taken, under the several lengths aforesaid, shall pay five shillings, and forfeit the fish and the instruments.' By our Gallic neighbours, who are some authority in these matters, barbel are held in high esteem: at Tours and other inland places situated on rivers, 'Les trois Barbeaux' is a well-known sign; and an abundant supply is always ready for 'noces et festins' in water-cages under the bridge. We beg, therefore, to assure citizen anglers, and others who may be incredulous, that these fish, simply boiled in salt and water, and eaten cold, with a squeeze of lemon-juice, will be found by no means de-

spicable fare, and we particularly commend to their notice the head and its appurtenances: Bloch recommends to boil them with a bit of bacon to heighten the flavour. One precaution however should be taken before cooking; the roe must be entirely removed, as a very small fragment will produce serious internal derangement. One heautontimorounenos, yclept Antonius Gazius, undertook, as a warning to mankind, to eat two mouthfuls of barbel roe, and not more than as many hours after the experiment was attacked with symptoms as alarming as those produced by Asiatic cholera,—racking pains and purging, cold extremities, and deliquium; and in the second stage of his illness he experienced such a prolonged state of vital prostration that his friends fairly gave him up:* Gesner reports that he had seen cases as ugly: yet in spite of these recitals, this pernicious roe (which Machaon would hardly have ventured to prescribe to Ajax as a spring aperient) was at no remote period mercilessly used, not in camp practice, but in civil service, and figured as a remedy in foreign codexes and home pharmacopœias.

Cyprinus Gobio (Gudgeon).

The length of the cyprinus gobio seldom exceeds eight inches. Both its size and plumpness are correctly given by Ausonius in the following lines:—

> Tu quoque flumineas inter memorande cohortes
> Gobi, non major geminis sine pollice palmis,
> Præpinguis, teres, ovipari congestior alvo.

Ovid also speaks of its smooth spineless back, as contrasted with the bristling lophoderm of the perch, which

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* We are bound to mention the *e contra* evidence of Bloch, who gave his family and ate himself a considerable quantity of barbel roe without any disagreeable results.

frequents the same localities—'lubricus, et spina nocuus non gobius ulla:' unless he refers here to the sea gudgeon, as Synesius certainly does where he says, that along the African coast men take muraenas and crabs, but mere urchins, *μειράκια*, angle for julis and smooth gobies, *κωβίους εὐτελεῖς*. To enjoy which of these two delicacies it was that Ptolemy invited over to Egypt the parasite Archephon from Attica is uncertain; not so, however, that this bon-vivant went, and was offered there at supper a portion of a small dish of these delicacies, which he let pass without taking any. Conduct so strange and unexpected made Ptolemy first stare, and then mutter to his confidant that he must have invited either a blind or an insane man to his table. Whereupon Alcanor good-naturedly put the guest's abstinence in a new and more favourable light, by attributing it entirely to modesty: 'He saw it, sire, but deemed himself unworthy to lay profane hands upon so divine a little fish.'

Galen speaks in no measured terms of the excellence of the gudgeon, declaring it to rank very high amongst the finny tribe; not for the mere pleasure of eating it, but for the satisfaction attending its easy digestion. The moderns coincide with the ancients respecting the wholesomeness of this fish, though it is now never seen at a dinner-party, unless, perhaps, at some Thames-side villa, where still, in imitation of Pope—

> Although no turbots dignify rich boards,
> Are gudgeons, flounders, what the Thames affords.

In this small section the females outnumber the males by six to one, an excess which allows each gobius *mas* to keep a harem. We read in Athenæus of a certain Greek lady whose sweetheart's name was Goby, *ἐραστὴς ἦν αὐτῆς Κωβιός τις ὄνομα*; but whether he

was Turk enough to abuse the privilege of his name, and to maintain a seraglio, does not appear.*

All anglers know that gobies are very greedy biters; in allusion to which the prince of poets says—

> But fish not with this melancholy bait,
> For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion.

And another sings—

> What gudgeons are we men,
> Every woman's easy prey!
> Though we 've felt the hook, again
> We bite, and they betray.†

So that the 'Angler's Lament'—

> At a brandling once gudgeons would gape,
> But they seem to have alter'd their forms, now:
> Have they taken advice of the Council of Nice,
> And rejected the Diet of Worms, now?‡

is pure poetic fiction, a gudgeon being as incapable of refusing a lively young brandling when it falls in his way, as a lion a succulent kid. In places where the goby thrives, the supply is sometimes so abundant that they are thrown to the pigs. The eggs of the females, which are of a peculiar bluish colour, take a month, it is said, to hatch.

Cyprinus Tinca (Tench).

> Tinca vocor, quare? maculosum respice tergum,
> Coctaque post troctam, gloria prima feror.

Ausonius speaks disparagingly of tench, as the poor man's *pis aller*, ranking it with those vile fish which, as Columella instructs us, answer no good purpose, either to keep or cook.§ Yet in spite of the prejudice enter-

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* The name was also one of derision, and κωβίου τόκον, son of a gudgeon, was applied to a fishmonger's heir; as Sydney Smith's equivalent cognomen, Young Crumpet, stands for a baker's son.

† Gay. ‡ Hood.

§ 'Viles pisces ne captare quidem nedum alere conducit.'

tained by some Italian doctors and all the old women of Italy, who believe this fish to be so impregnated with marsh malaria as necessarily to engender ague,

Nessuno mangia tenca
Che febbre non senta,*

at Florence it is rightly held superior to any fishy food which enters the market; and in the Neapolitan pescheria yields to very few finer marine species. A Florentine noble had once the hardihood to assert at Leo X.'s table, that there was nothing that swam the sea, to his mind, comparable to a good Tuscan tench;† which declaration, though it convulsed the native Romans assembled at the board with laughter at the simplicity of so poor a connoisseur, we should certainly have sided with, and been willing to back an Agnano, Baccano, or Thrasymene 'tenca' against the whole of the Mediterranean ichthyarchy.

A good way of serving tench is, cooked in a rich gravy sauce, containing raisins, Corinth currants, and pine-cone kernels, together with all the other ingredients of an 'agrodolce' stew, bringing it quite hot to table, and there squeezing over it the juice of a lemon: or else take just sufficient water to cover the fish, add a quarter of a pint of vinegar, a bunch of thyme, an onion, some lemon-peel, a little scraped horse-radish, and a seasoning of salt; put in the tench before the water boils, to prevent the skin cracking: for sauce, dissolve two anchovies in water over the fire, with half a pint of stewed oysters, a quarter of a pint of shrimps, and a sufficient quantity of melted butter; garnish the dish with slices of lemon and pickled mushrooms. The skin (which from its thickness has procured this fish in Holland the name of shoemaker)

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* Italian proverb.

† 'Ego certe Thrasymenam tincam conditam in leucophago his vestris triglis, spigolis et rhombis valde præstitero.'—*Aldrov.*

is a first-rate delicacy, and quite equal to turtle. Tench, like the gudgeon, is held a dish for invalids, and has been pressed into their service in more ways than one: for convalescents who are not yet allowed mutton, may safely go from gruel and sago to tench broth; and in febrile attacks, it used to be applied to the palms of the feet and hands, to absorb the fever; laid over the region of the liver in jaundice, still more wonderful results ensued,—after one or two applications the skin of the icteric patient would, we are assured, return to a perfectly natural colour, whilst the fish became more and more saffron in hue, and at length expired in a jaundice; on being cut open it was found dyed throughout of a deep gamboge yellow! A live tench applied to the temple has been (*on dit*) known to assuage the throbbings of nervous headaches; and worn round the neck, to cure sore eyes: it was also found equally potent in obstinate worm cases.

This fish very seldom attains to large dimensions here: a foot and a half is considered a very unusual length; in Italy however it has been known to reach twenty pounds weight.

In heraldry, the tench has not been made so much use of as many much poorer, and not less common fish: the old German family, Von Tanques, bears in their arms three, or; three tench hauriant, gules, are the arms of the French family Tanche: a Flanders marshal carries the same; and Sir Fisher Tench has adopted his namesake as part of his coat.

Cyprinus Abramis (Bream).

There is a poor fish of the Adriatic which a man's character is thought compromised by eating; call any one a 'mangia mendole' at Venice, and if he have a stiletto by him you will probably feel it under your waistcoat. The bream is as worthless a fish as the mendole, but without

compromising the taste or reputation of him who eats it. It has even found partisans:

> Full many a fair partrich had hee on mewe,
> And many a *brome*, and many a luce in stewe,

says Chaucer. Walton also speaks well of it; Cuvier concedes it to be a moderately good fish; but his countrymen, going beyond him, have this proverb, 'Qui a brême peut bramer ses amis' (who has bream in the pond may ask friends to his table). There are even connoisseurs who have recommended with equal confidence 'a carp's head, a bream's middle, and a pike's tail:' we should be content with the first and last cuts, and be careful to eschew the 'juste milieu,' for the whole fish is insipid and full of spines:—

> The flabby solids fill'd with treacherous bones

is a line we borrow from Ausonius, as correctly describing the bream, which, if it be eaten at all, should be eaten as soon as caught,

> Nec duraturus post bina trihoria mensis.

Cyprinus Cobites (Loach).

The word Cobites, which occurs in Athenæus, has been borrowed and made use of by modern ichthyologists, as the scientific designation for loach; a fish which, though it must have fallen occasionally under the eye of those Romans who kept stews and stock-ponds, was probably, like the last, deemed too worthless a pisciculus to have a name, and was left anonymous in consequence. Hicesius describes indeed an ancient cobites as 'a small light-coloured fish, and covered with mucus,' points wherein it will certainly bear a comparison with its modern namesake the loach, which, as Walton says, 'groweth not to be above a finger long, and is no thicker than is suitable to that length;' but then he adds, it is 'of

the shape of an eel, and hath a beard of wattles, like a barbel,' neither of which very striking peculiarities could possibly have been overlooked by Hicesius, had this been the fish he intended.

The loach enjoys a good reputation: our 'Izaak' considers it a dainty dish at table; and Gesner emphatically, the invalid's fish. We must, however, discriminate a little here, for there are three distinct species, of very different merits: 'he that feedeth and is bred in little and clear swift brooks or rills, over gravel, and in the sharpest streams, is the best;' inferior to them in quality and size, though from the same locality, is the C. taenia, characterized 'by a forked prickle in front of the eyes:' and lastly, there is the common pond loach, C. fossilis, of soft flabby fibre, and strongly impregnated with the smell and taste of tank: this species exceeds the others in size, attaining occasionally upwards of a foot in length, and is further distinguished by possessing at least ten barbels to his beard.

The fecundity of the cobites is immense; they begin to propagate very young, and seem to be always either spawning or in roe: this surprising power of reproduction was sufficiently known to be proverbial in Shakspeare's day. In a dialogue between two Rochester carriers, he makes one of these *καρτεροὶ ἄνδρες* say to his companion (we care not to transcribe the whole passage), 'Your chimney lie breeds fleas like a loach.'* Nor is their power of sustaining life less striking than that of engendering it. Like Theophrastus' *κόβιοι*, they are not unfrequently found frozen alive;† on such occasions

* The generally prolific nature of fish seems to have attracted notice from the very earliest time: thus Jacob, blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, says, 'Let them grow into a multitude as do fishes;' a circumstance no doubt adverted to by Solomon in his book on Fishes, which has so unfortunately been lost.

† We do not know of any creatures of a higher organization

the warmth of the hand, it is said, is sufficient to cause them to thaw, and move,—effects still more expeditiously produced by putting them into the frying-pan, when care must be taken, it seems, to prevent their fulfilling the proverb, by leaping into the fire.

Loach, according to Bloch, have a singular propensity to swallow atmospheric air, which, in passing through the intestines, changes its character, and is converted, says Ehrmann, into carbonic acid gas, but Schneider denies this.

The favourite pastime of the C. fossilis is to roll and wallow in the mire of his pond. Thither he retreats for warmth and cover when the air is chilly; and so fondly is he attached to this soft duvet, that on leaving it, as he always does on the approach of bad weather,* it is only to grub up and disperse the ooze, till the water has been rendered congenially dirty to his taste. The restless activity of the fish in accomplishing this object is said to have given origin to the name of loach—that word being derived from the French verb 'locher,' to fidget. The next subgenus, Anableps, differs from cobites, in having the cornea and iris divided into two portions by transverse bands, so that the eyes have two pupils and appear to be double, though in fact they have but one crystalline lens, one vitrea, and one retina; this is a structure of which no second example occurs among vertebrated animals.†

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than fish capable of being iced *in toto;* but the restoration of frost-bitten toes and fingers in our own race, and Hunter's artificial congelation of rabbits' ears, show that the vital principle will sometimes permit great liberties with impunity.

* On this account it is sometimes confined in a glass globe, where, by the prescient uneasiness of its movements twenty-four hours before a storm, it constitutes an animated barometer, on which some people place plenary reliance.

† Cuvier.

Leuciscı, or White Fish.

Amongst the white fresh-water fish included under this heading are many species of which we would fain speak:* the L. rutilus (roach), whose frisky movements have caused him to be considered as the fit emblem of robust health, and thus made the proverb 'sound as a roach' familiar to the ear as the form of the well-known subject of it is to the eye;† the L. cephalus (chub), whose obese body, empty head, and inflated face, helped the Stratford bard (who must often have pulled them out of the Avon) to the simile—

> I never saw a fool lean; the chub-faced fop
> Shines sleek with full-cramm'd fat of happiness;

the L. vulgaris (dace), which comes in for a share of Walton's gentle wish—

> Let me live harmlessly, and near the brink
> Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling-place,
> Where I may see my quill or cork down sink,
> With eager bite of perch, or bleak, or dace;

the red-eyed rüdd, L. eryophthalmus; the azurine, L.

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* Several of these small and apparently insignificant fish are borne, notwithstanding their diminutive size, as heraldic badges of distinction. The family De la Roche (whose first progenitor, Adam De la Roche, founded, as far back as about the year 1200, Roche Castle and a Benedictine priory in Pembrokeshire, and gave rise to a wide-spreading posterity) is proud to bear three roach naiant in pale, argent, for arms. The Pictons adopt three minnows or pentis in pale, gules. While vert, three chub-fish hauriant, sable, are the arms of Chubb, and borne by Lord Dormer of Wenge, on one of his quarterings.

† Moule gives a much more probable explanation of the phrase, which he derives from the legend of St. Roche, who was fabled to cure, on proper importunity, those afflicted with any grievous plague, restoring them to perfect health. 'Sound as a roche,' then, seems to be a metonymy for 'sound as one of St. Roche's patients.'

cæruleus; nature's minim, the minnow, L. phoxinus, the tiny ogre which devours its own dead. All those favourites of our young boyhood, which somehow never entirely escaped our rod; for when the midsummer *day* dream was passed, and our light fish-basket had nothing to show but gentles, pastes, and tangled tackle, we were sure at night, albeit with closed eyes, to see the bobbing float disappear under water, presently to bring out the *πεπεδημένον ἰχθὺν* twisting on the line; and soon to cover our eager hands with the mica of imaginary scales.* On any or all of these prime favourites of our teens we could now (how complacently!) dwell; but warned by the recollection of many other more im-

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* The nursery classics did not embrace, in the Jack-the-Giant-killer days of our youth, the same instructive and moral entertainment which they do at present. The story of the 'Little Fisherman' and others *ejusdem farinæ* bear reference to the *past*; no child properly instructed by such a lively warning as the following (which we copy from our little four-year-old's last birthday present) is ever likely to become an angler, or to be visited with our own youthful dreams:—

There was a little fellow once,
  And Harry was his name,
And many a naughty trick he had,
  I tell it to his shame.

He minded not his friends' advice
  But followed his own wishes,
And one most cruel trick of his
  Was that of catching fishes.

And many a little fish he caught,
  And pleased was he to look,
To see him writhe in agony
  And struggle on the hook.

At last, when having caught enough,
  And also tired himself,
He hastened home, intending there
  To put them on a shelf.

portant fish yet waiting to be brought forward, our remarks on the Leuciscı must e'en be confined to the very smallest, but, as we shall see, not by any means the least interesting of the group : the

Leuciscus Alburnus, or Bleak.

This bleak, or 'fresh water sprat,' says Walton, 'is ever in motion, and therefore has been called by some the river swallow; his back is of a pleasant, sad, sea-water green, his belly white and shining like the mountain snow.' He reports him also to be 'excellent meat, and in best season in August.' The name bleak, from *blicken*,

But as he jumped, to reach a dish
  To put his fishes in,
A large meat-hook that hung close by
  Did catch him by the chin.

The maids came running, frighted much
  To see him hanging there;
And soon they took him from the hook,
  And set him in a chair.

The surgeon came and stopp'd the blood,
  And up he bound his head,
And then they carried him upstairs
  And laid him on his bed.

Conviction darted on his mind,
  As groaning there he lay,
And with compunction then he thought
  About his cruel play.

And oh, said he, poor little fish,
  What tortures they have borne,
While I, well pleased, have stood to see
  Their tender bodies torn!

And now I feel how great the smart,
  And terrible the pain.
As long as I can hook myself
  I'll hook no fish again.

to gleam or twinkle, certainly belongs to these 'shiners,' who have been long mulcted of their lustrous scales for the fabrication of false pearls. As our chief interest in bleak is connected with this manufacture, we shall introduce him to the reader by a few words of preliminary notice *in re* pearl.

Venice, long unrivalled in the artistic inventiveness and ability of her glass-blowers, conceived among other bright vitreous inventions, the idea of smearing the inside of clear white beads with an opaque pearly varnish; and she executed the device so admirably, and made these deceptive pearls so perfect, that the Government felt called upon to interfere, and formally to prohibit the continuance of a craft by which the public were continually exposed to fraudulent practices. We know not whether any of these wonderful counterfeits of the sixteenth century are still in existence; if so, their antiquity and connection with the history of pearl-making must render them both curious and valuable. After awhile, the fabrication of false pearls was taken up by a Frenchman named Jacquin, to whom the nacrous idea first occurred, on seeing the water in which bleak had been washed charged with a cloud of minute micaceous particles of this sparkling lymph. He took a small quantity for experiment, and, when the silvery atoms had subsided to the bottom of the vessel, carefully decanted off the water, washed the sediment clean from impurities, and mixing with it a thick, viscid, and colourless fluid, found himself possessed of a beautifully lustrous paste, that he called 'essence of pearl;' with which he went to work, and having formed gypsum beads into the various rounded shapes such as are usually assumed by pearls, he rolled them in the mixture till they were completely coated over with a solid smooth crust.*

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* By a procedure analogous to this, the *birboni* of Naples

Jacquin's beads soon gained favour at Court, but did not long maintain it; for their value being all on the surface, would not stand wear; the ladies' skins were found to have superior attraction for the nacrous matter, which, in consequence, left the gypsum bare to shine upon the wearers' white necks and shoulders. Some leading belles, therefore, concerted with the bead-maker that the medium should henceforth be glass, and the covering turned into a lining that could not come off and sparkle in the wrong place. This was so great an improvement, that what Venice had formerly feared actually came to pass in Paris; people could not at first distinguish these factitious ornaments from the real article, and some amusing mistakes took place in consequence. A poor marquis loved a mercenary belle, who proved as hard as 'Ailsa Craig,' till his valet, a knowing fellow, put him up to a device, as taking with ladies of her rank as a canary waistcoat, according to Mr. Fagan, is with modern housemaids. The marquis procured, for three louis, a string of the newly introduced false pearls, and presented them to the fair Cleopatra, who, forming from the offering a wrong estimate of her inamorato's purse, yielded with the sweetest grace to his suit.

The bleak whence nacre was originally procured is the L. bipustulatus of the Seine; but as the scales of all bleak yield a more or less copious deposit of this pearly powder, and as some species of leuciscі abound in almost every river, 'Bleak Houses' began to be established*

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carry on a clever forgery in glass; having modelled a number of vessels, chiefly lachrymatories, from the antique, they first roll these counterfeits in a strong adhesive paste, and afterwards in the iridescent scrapings from old glass, which presently invests them entirely, offering to the eye of the gulled purchaser nothing but beautiful prismatic colours of time-worn vitrefactions.

* One very flourishing manufactory was established at Saint-Jean de Marcel, in the Châlonnais, whence, at one time,

not only on the banks of the Seine, but also on the Loire, Saône, Rhone, and indeed on most of the principal rivers of France. The wholesale destruction of these Lilliputian leucisci was carried on unremittingly for a number of years, but a new fish was at length discovered in the Tiber, which left the bleak of the Seine in comparative peace and security; and Roman pearls, as they were henceforth called, being found vastly superior to those hitherto manufactured in Paris or anywhere else in France, soon drove all other *unionist* competitors completely out of the market. These pearls continue, to the present day, unrivalled in the soft lustre of their light; possessing an advantage even over the real oyster pearl in that they are not liable, like it, to change colour.

The argentina, or Tiber pearl-fish, is strikingly like the atherine or sea smelt, but differs from it in having one prickly and one soft back fin, whereas the sea smelt has two spinous dorsals. Both these fish are distinguishable from the true smelt by the absence of that fragrant cucumber smell which belongs exclusively to it.

Immense shoals of argentine are consumed annually in this commerce, and as their range scarcely extends beyond the embouchure of the Tiber, it seems wonderful that the little creatures should not long ago have met with the fate of beavers and great whales, and been diminished and brought low, if not wholly exterminated; but this is by no means the case, their supply seems inexhaustible; year after year the same enormous quantities, first deprived of the swim-bladder, are sold to the

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ten thousand pearls were issued every week: for so large a demand an incalculable number of fish must have been put to the strigil: it has been calculated that for every single pound of scales four thousand bleak are immolated, and a pound of scales yields only four ounces of pearly precipitate, which makes the process something like that of melting down an ox for a pint of strong essence of beef.

plebiscite throughout Rome, and form, for a season, the food of half the Trasteveri. The pearly matter here is not procured, as in the bleak, from the washing of the scales, but from the swim-bladder itself, which, previous to trituration, looks like some fine orient pearl lying in the body of the fish, an appearance rendered more striking from the strong contrasts it presents to the stomach, which is quite black. No sooner are these soft silvery bladders extracted, than they are instantly plunged into a bottle of spirits-of-wine, which preserves their beauty unimpaired till the artificer has occasion to use them; he then macerates the requisite number in a solution of isinglass till all the pearly particles are detached; and having already prepared a supply of filmy glass beads of different shapes, he introduces, by means of a blowpipe, a layer of the pearl liquid into the interior of each through a small hole left for the purpose at both ends of the bead. The better to distribute it equally throughout the cavity he gently shakes them on a sieve, and after repeating the operation once or twice till all look solid, fills up any remaining vacancy with fused wax, clears out the orifices of the holes to remove any obstruction, and finally strings them upon strong silk thread, ready for sale. Amongst the many false things sold in the city of Rome for genuine valuables, these counterfeits, which are never intended to deceive purchasers, are by far the most graceful. Mixed up with much vile modern bronze, flaunting shell cameos, pigmy temples in giallo or Irish 'nero antico,' the trash in the trays of mosaicisti, and all the false coinage and pseudo-antique gems palmed off on foreign public for genuine, argentine pearls always look well, and but for their low price would be universally admired. But when it is told that the whole gear of necklace, bracelets, brooch, and ear-rings may be bought for a few scudi, no wonder if the tiara'd dames who carry so many thousand pounds

about their heads and persons should despise them, and that no woman above an inferior bourgeoise dare show herself at Rome decked in such inexpensive finery.

The ancients knew nothing of procuring pearls from argentine swim-bladders or bleak scales, but they certainly had an equivalent; for Chares of Mitylene speaks of a fish in the Indian seas, oblong in shape, like a pearl oyster, and of an agreeable smell, whose bones (called perri) furnished ornaments for the ear, and arm and ankle rings; and was more prized by the Medes, Persians, and Asiatics generally, than even gold itself.

Besides fabricated pearls, which are entirely a modern invention (minus the raw material furnished by fish), a singular practice is adopted in certain countries, of forcing various bivalves to make these valuables to order. 'The Chinese,' says Beckmann, 'at the beginning of summer, when mussels repair to the surface and open their shells, take five or six small beads attached to a string, and place them within the opening; at the end of a year they re-examine them, and by this time commonly find the whole deposit thickly invested with the nacrous secretion.'*

The irritation produced by the introduction of rough foreign bodies into the shell is sufficient, it seems, to draw to the spot a flow of the pearly secretion. Fabricius saw, at Sir Joseph Banks's, some oysters from China, with bits of metal within completely coated over in this way; and the pearl-fishers are said to find more and finer specimens in shells of an uneven than of a smooth surface. Linnæus, adopting the Chinese or some other

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* The pearly coating of these base metal beads is but the copy, by oysters, of a peculiar species of forgery practised formerly in the fabrication of *foderate* coins; these consist of an interior or *anima* of copper laminated on both sides with an apparently *continuous* coating of the purest silver; a device which no modern sagacity has been able to imitate or explain.

equally successful method of forcing pearl-oysters to be industrious in their craft, became at last a great adept in the art, and offered to divulge the secret to Government for eighteen thousand copper dollars. His Government however, proving, as ours often does, penny-wise and pound-foolish, did not close with the proposal, enabling one Bagge, of Gottenburg, to bag the discovery, but apparently not to profit by it, for the *sealed* recipe appeared again in the market in 1780, subsequent to which, says Beckmann, all traces of it have been lost. He adds, 'Linnæus once showed me a small box of pearls, saying, These are my handiwork, and, large as they are, I was but five years in producing them.' Beckmann told him he guessed by what process they had been made, and quoted a passage from an early work of the Swedish naturalist, wherein he defines a pearl to be an 'excrescence on the inside of a shell when the outside has been pierced,' on which he took huff, asked no more questions, and abruptly changed the discourse. The success of Linnæus however would seem to have been unusually great, many persons having tried, both by drilling the shell and wounding the flesh, to produce pearls, without obtaining the desired results.

The ancients adopted a much more expeditious way to obtain a supply of pearls than that in vogue amongst the slow subjects of the Celestial Empire. When they had smoothed the water with oil, the better to make out where the gaping bivalves lay, they quickly pierced the shells, and received the silvery ichor, which instantly flowed from the wound, into a number of metallic cavities, where it hardened into pearl. This process of drawing off pearl-juice, by tapping the molluscs which circulate it, was again had recourse to, it appears, at a very early period of our own era. Pliny, who does not mention it, has however a passage where he speaks of the fishermen's burglarious attempt upon pearl shells, and how it

sometimes fared with the burglar. 'As touching the fishe which is the mother of pearle, as soon as it perceiveth and feeleth a man's hand within, by and by she shutteth, and by that meanes hideth and concealeth her treasure within, for well wotteth she that therefore she is sought for. But let the fisher look well to his fingers, for if she catcheth his hand between, off it goeth; and verily this is a just punishment for the thiefe, and none more, albeit she be furnished with other meanes of revenge.' Though the object here stated was to remove pearls already formed, it is not impossible that occasionally the purpose for which the fingers were introduced into the open shell may have been to puncture the fish for a future supply, for Androsthenes in Athenæus informs us that pearls lie in a liquid state in the flesh of the oyster, and to draw out these drops to harden into pearls may have been sometimes a further design of the 'thiefe.'

Pliny gives a summary of all that was known in his day about pearls. He speaks of the names given to different sorts; of the comparative merits of each; how weather affected their formation; shows how 'physemeta' pearls are but surface bubbles, and have no substance at all;* how the good ones are of many layers, and have a firm compact body; how the best are formed out of the realms of light, in the dark caves of the sea; how there are five points to be particularly attended to in purchasing, viz. orient whiteness,† size,‡ roundness,

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* Tertullian says of all pearls that they are 'concharum vitia et verrucæ,' the weaknesses and wens of shell-fish.

† 'In Britain it is certain that some do grow, but they be small, dim, and nothing orient; nathless Julius Cæsar, late emperor of famous memory, does not dissemble that the breastplate which he dedicated to Venus's mother within her temple, was made of English pearls.'

‡ Theophrastus speaks of pearls out of which precious neck-

smoothness, and weight;* and finally, how the union of all in the same specimen is so rare, 'that our dainties and delicates here at Rome have devised for them the name of *uniones*, or as we should now say paragons, uniques, nonpareils, or nonsuches.' He only speaks in particular commendation of pearls shaped like alabaster unguent-bottles (*i.e.* pyriform) and called elenchi.

Everybody has heard of the extravagant value set by the ancient Romans upon those two rival productions of shell-fish, pearls and purple.

All beforehand (continues the same author) was nothing in comparison to the purples, precious coquilles, and pearles, that come from the sea; it was not sufficient belike to bring them into the kitchen, to let them down the throat and the belly, unlesse men and women both carried them about in their hands and ears, upon the head, and all over their bodies. Oh the folly of us men! See how there is nothing that goeth to the pampering and trimming of this our carcass, of so great price and account, that it is not bought with the greatest hazard, even with the venture of a man's life! But now to the purpose: the richest merchandise of all, and the most soveraigne commoditye thro'out the whole world, are these pearles. The Indian ocean is chiefe for sending them; and yet to come by them we must go to search amongst those huge and terrible monsters of the sea which we have spoken of before. We must passe over farre seas and saile into farre countries, so remote, and come into those partes where the heate of the sunne is so excessive and extreame, and when all is done we may perhaps misse of them, for even the Indians themselves are glad to seeke amonge the islands for them, and when they have done all they can, meet with very fewe. . . . These pearles, to say the truth, are of the nature (in a manner) of an inheritance by descent in perpetuetie; they followe commonly

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laces were made from an oyster-shell, like *pinna*, but smaller, about the size of 'fishes' eyes;' but when it is remembered that there are minnows, and marine monsters thirty feet long, each with eyes corresponding to these proportions, we have but a very vague idea of the size intended.

* He speaks of some which weighed half an ounce and a drachm.

by right the next heeres; when they passe in sale they go with warrantize in as solemn manner as a good lordshipe.

Elsewhere he says,—

Our dames take a great pride in braverie, and have these not only hang dangling at their fingers, but also two or three of them together pendent at their eares. And names forsoothe they have newly devised for them, when they serve theire turn in this their wantone excesse and superfluitie of roiot; for when they knocke one against another, as they hang on their eares and fingers, they call them Crotalia (rattlers), as if they take pleasure to hear the sound of these pearles rattling together. Now adaies, it is grown to this passe, that men and women, and poore men's wives affect to wear them because they would be thought riche; and a by-word it is among them, that a fair pearle in a woman's eare is as good, in where she goeth as an huisher to make way; for that every one will give such the place. Nay, our gentlemen have come now to weare them on their feet, and not at their shoe latchets only, but also upon their startops and fine buskins, which they garnish all over with pearle. For it will not suffice nor serve their turne, to carrie pearles about them, but they must tread upon pearles, go among pearles, and walk as it were upon a pavement of pearles.

Our extracts from Pliny have been long, yet we cannot close them without citing two particular cases in point to show the prodigious price set upon pearls, and the prodigality of the women who wore them. The lady he first mentions is Lollia Paulina, late wife and then widow of the Emperor Caligula, whom

I myself have seen when she was dressed and set out, not in stately wise, nor of purpose for some great solemnitie, but only when she was to goe to a wedding supper, or rather, to a feast when the assurance was made, and great persons they were not, that made the said feast. I have seen her, I say, so beset and bedeckt all over with hemeraulds and pearles, disposed in rows, rankes, and courses one by another; round about the attire of her head, her carole, her borders, her peruke of hair, her bongrace and chaplet; at her ears pendent, about her neck in a carcenet, upon her wrests in bracelets, and on her fingers in rings, that she glitterd and shone againe like the sun as she went. The value of these ornaments she esteemd and rated at four hundred

hundred thousand sestertii (10 millions); and offered openly to prove it out of hand by her books of accounts and reckonings. Yet were not these jewels the gifts and presents of the prodigal prince her husband, but the goods and ornaments from her owne house, fallen unto her by way of inheritance from her grandfather, which he had gotten by the *robbing and spoiling of whole provinces*. See what the issue and end was of those extortions and outrageous exactions of his: this was it, that M. Lollius, slandered and defamed for receiving *bribes and presents of the kings in the East*, and being out of favor with C. Cæsar, sonne of Augustus, and having lost his amity, dranke a cup of poyson and prevented his judicial trial; that forsooth his niece Lollia all to be hanged with jewels of 100 hundred thousand sestertii, should be seene glittering, and looked at of every man by candle-light at supper time.

Juvenal may have had this Lollian family in his mind when he wrote those noble lines of precept and warning to his countrymen in office:—

> If of companions pure a chosen band
> Assemble in thy halls and round thee stand;
> If thy tribunals' favours ne'er were sold
> By lost effeminates for damning gold;
> If thy chaste spouse, from stain of avarice free,
> Mark not her progress by rapacity,
> Nor meditate with harpy claws to spring
> On all the wealth that towns and cities bring,
> Then thy descent from Picus proudly trace,
> Take for thine ancestors the Titan race,
> And at the head of all Prometheus place.
> But if corruption drag thee in her train,
> If blood of Rome's allies for ever stain
> Thy lictor's broken scourge, or if the sight
> Of the worn axe and wearied arm delight,
> If forged deed thy false right-hand shall sign,
> If all the temples teem with frauds of thine,
> If night and the Santonic hood disguise
> Thy form from some adulterous enterprise,
> Wherefore to me the honours of thy race,
> Which these eternal villanies disgrace?

But, as Pliny says, this is not the greatest example

that can be produced of 'excessive riot and prodigality in pearls.'

Two only pearles there were together, the fairest and richest that ever have been known in the world; and those possessed at one time by Cleopatra, the last queene of Egypt, which came into her hands by the means of the great kings of the East, and were left unto her by descent. This princesse, when M. Anthony had strained himself to doo her all the pleasure he possibly could, and had feasted her day by day most sumptuously, and spared for no cost, in the height of her pride and wanton travesie (as being a noble curtezan and queene withal) began to debase the expence and provision of Anthony, and make no reckoning of his costly fare. When he demanded again how it was possible to go beyond this magnificence of his, she answered again, that she should spend upon him in one supper 100 hundred thousand sestertii (10 millions). Anthony, who would needs know how that might be (for he thought it was impossible), laid a great wager with her about it, and she bound it again, and made it good. The morrow after, when this was to be tried, and the wager either to be won or lost, Cleopatra made Anthony a supper (because she could not make default, and let the day appointed to passe), which was sumptuous and royal enough; howbeit there was no extraordinarie service seene upon the board: whereat Anthony laughed her to scorn, and by way of mockerie, required to see a bill, with the account of the particulars. She againe said, that whatsoever had been served up already, was but the overplus above the rate and proportion in question, affirming still, that shee would yet in that supper make up the full summe that she was seezed at; yea, herselfe alone would eat above that reckoning, and her own supper should cost 600 hundred thousand sestertii (60 millions), and with that commanded the second service to be brought in. The servitours that waited at her trencher (as they had in charge before) set before her one onely cruet of sharpe vinegar, the strength whereof is able to dissolve pearles. Now she had at her eares hanging those two most precious pearles, the singular and onely jewels of the world, and even nature's wonder. As Anthony looked wistfully upon and expected what shee would doo, she took one of them from her ear, steeped it in vinegar, and so soon as it was liquefied, drank it off. And as she was about to do the like by the other, L. Planeus, the judge of that wager, laid fast hold upon it with his hand, and pronounced withal, that Anthony had lost the wager. *Whereat the man fell*

into a passion of anger. There was an end of one pearle; but the fame of the fellow thereof may goe with it; for after that this brave Queene, the winner of so great a wager, was taken prisoner, and deprived of her royal estate, that other pearle was cut in twaine, that in memorial of that one halfe supper of theirs it should remaine unto posteritie, hanging at both eares of Venus at Rome, in the temple Pantheon.*

It is impossible to read the above recital without perceiving that the great triumvir's passion for the Egyptian queen was somewhat interested. He loved her, but evidently considered her jewels as part of herself; and therefore when he saw her making away with so much of her attractiveness, fumed and fell into a passion. Here Cleopatra might fairly have turned round upon her mercenary knight, and twitted him as the lady did Hudibras, for his hypocrisy:—

'Tis not those orient pearls, my *teeth*,
That you are so transported with;
But those I wear on ear and neck
Produce the amorous effect.
Each tender sigh and trickling tear
Longs for my million pounds a year;
Your languishing transports are *fond*
Of statute, mortgage, bill, and bond.

* Holland's translation.

CHAPTER XV.

ESOCIDÆ, OR PIKES.

IF the Greeks were acquainted with this common and widely distributed fish, they have certainly not left the evidence of such knowledge in any notices which have come down to us; whether we should have been wiser had more of their piscatory writings remained, cannot be determined with certainty; but it seems scarcely probable that so striking a fish as the pike should have escaped the notice of so careful an observer as Aristotle* had it really been an inhabitant of the lakes and rivers of ancient Greece; some, indeed, have conjectured that the oxyrhynchus of the Nile (a creature mentioned by Ælian, supposed to be sprung from the wounds of Osiris, and held on that account in great respect by the Egyptians†) was the true ancestor of the pike; but as Ælian's

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* Of Aristotle, who was so intimately acquainted with fish in particular, that it seemed doubtful whether he had obtained his extraordinary knowledge of their habits from his innate genius and powers of observation, or whether Nereus or Proteus might not have risen from the depths expressly to reveal it to him: *τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους τεθαύμακα τῆς ἀκριβείας, πότε μαθὼν ἢ παρὰ τίνος ἀνελθόντος ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ Πρώτεως ἢ Νήρεως τί ποιοῦσιν οἱ ἰχθύες ἢ πῶς κοιμῶνται ἢ πῶς διαιτῶνται.* (Ath.)

† So great is the reverence entertained by the Nile boatmen for this oxyrhynchus, that if one be enclosed in their nets it is immediately liberated with all care; and sooner than keep such a prisoner, the crew would willingly lose the whole draught of fish: *προτιμῶσιν ἀθηρίαν, ἢ ἁλόντος τὴν μάλιστα εὐθηρίαν.* (Ælian.)

fish, according to Plutarch, comes up from the sea, we need look no further, to be convinced that this particular oxyrhynchus cannot be the esox of modern anglers' guides, which will not live in salt water; while if any additional objection against the identity of the two were necessary, the very name (though it has led to an opposite inference) ought to be conclusive; for with what plausibility can the broad patulous anserine mouthpiece of the pike be assimilated with the sharp-pointed form of beak so clearly designated by the word *ὀξύῤῥυγχος*.* This terror of the modern duck-pond seems to have been as little known at Rome as he was at Athens. Pliny's esox (a name which modern ichthyology has imposed upon the pike) is evidently a misnomer, for the Roman naturalist only mentions it cursorily as a river-fish, and as attaining the weight of a thousand pounds. Now the mere fact that both esox and pike are river-fish will scarcely, we imagine, be held a sufficient reason by the prudent for identifying the two; and as regards size, whenever a pike weighing a thousand pounds shall have been taken out of any river or lake, it will be time to consider what weight should attach to an opinion at present wholly unsupported.

The first appearance of Sir Lucius in poetry or prose is, we believe, in the fourth century, when the little-known 'French abbé,'† but well-known Latin poet, Ausonius, ushers him into no very favourable notice under this now familiar name.

> The wary *luce*, midst wrack and rushes hid,
> The scourge and terror of the scaly brood,

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* Ælian designates four very different fish under this common name; one of them, which 'inhabits the Caspian, and is carried, salted, on camels' backs to Ecbatana,' is no doubt the sturgeon.

† Buffon.

Unknown at friendship's hospitable board,
Smokes 'midst the smoky tavern's coarsest food.*

The word 'lucius' (whence the illustrious O'Trigger, after the precedent of a Roman emperor,† took his first 'nom de guerre') has been interpreted by some as a derivative from λύκος, in consequence of the wolf-like rapacity of the pike; by others from 'lucco,' to shine, in allusion to certain phosphorescent properties he is said to display in the dark. Which of these two derivations be the worse it would be difficult to say, and we accordingly leave both to the judgment of adept etymologists for decision. The origin of that 'verbum usitatissimum,' pike, is equally obscure; Skinner and Tooke would derive it from the French word 'pique,' on account, say they, of the sharpness of its snout, but to give point to this etymology it should be pointed too ('l'épingle, l'abeille, l'éperon piquent'); but a sword, although equally sharp, unless it be a small sword, 'ne pique point, mais blesse:' and so our adjective piked, from the same verb, means 'pointed.' Shakspeare calls a man with a pointed beard, a piked man. 'Why then I suck my teeth, and catechize my piked man of countries;' and in Camden we read of 'shoes and patterns snouted and piked more than a finger long.' The French

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* Lucius obscurus ulva lacunas
Obsidet. His nullos mensarum lectus ad usus,
Fumat fumosis olido nidore popinis.

† Lucius Verus—*i. e.* the *original* Lucius, as he first adopted it. There was also long after him a Pope Lucius, whose character was in accordance with that of his water namesake:

Lucius est piscis, rex atque tyrannus aquarum,
A quo discordat Lucius iste parum.

In English heraldry no fish was so early borne as the pike; it occurs in the arms of the family Lucy, *seu* Lucie, as far back as the reign of Henry the Second.

names are of easier explanation than any of the above: brochet, or brocheton, is evidently derived from the spit-like shape of the body; and lance, lanceron, from the speed with which these fish hurl themselves upon prey or against an enemy; lastly, becquet is a sobriquet suggested no doubt by the flattened form (more like a duck's bill than a fish's mouth) of the muzzle.

Although strangers to her waters, some pike are, it seems, no strangers to the language of ancient Greece; and one of the race, in leaving a most extraordinary record of himself, has adopted this learned language for the vehicle of communication. In the year 1497 a giant 'Jack-killer' was captured in the vicinity of Mannheim, with the following announcement in Greek appended to his muzzle: 'I am the first fish that was put into this pond by the hands of the Emperor Frederic the Second, on this third day of October, 1262.' The age of the informant, therefore, if his lips spoke truth (and the unprecedented dimensions of the body left little doubt on that point), was more than two hundred and thirty-five years. Already he had been the survivor of many important changes in the political and social world around, and would have swum out perhaps as many more had the captors been as solicitous to preserve his life, as they were to take his portrait. This, on the demise of the original, was hung up in the castle of Lautern, and the enormous carcase (which when entire weighed three hundred and fifty pounds, and measured nineteen feet) was sent to the museum of Mannheim, where, deprived of its flesh, and articulated *de novo*, it hung, and haply yet hangs, a light exsiccated skeleton, which a child might move. It has been long since recorded of great men that they lose much of their weight corporeal after death: 'expende Hannibalem,'—

> That urn of ashes to the balance bear,
> And mark how much of Hannibal be there;

and from the above account of this esox it would seem that great fish are in the same predicament; a reflection suggestive of a new second reading for the remainder of the celebrated Latin line inchoated above, the substitution of 'lucc' *rice* 'duce:' 'quot libras in luce summo;'

> How many pounds of that great Jack remain,
> The well-gorged tyrant of two centuries' reign?

After the mention of such a monster as this, it would be an anti-climax to refer to Scotch, Irish, German, Swiss, or Italian specimens weighing from twenty to a hundred pounds each; any of which, however, would suffice to establish the longevity of pike, and show that Sir Francis Bacon's assigned period of forty years, which he considers the extreme limit of pike life, cannot have been deduced from correct data. We must not be deceived here by any supposed analogy between human oppressors and these tyrants of the deep; with us the allotted period for such savages is fortunately, for the most part, short; frequently they 'do not live out half their days,' comparatively:

> Few blood-stain'd despots pass the sable flood
> Unscathed by wounds or unbaptized in blood.*

But the pike is a notable exception to this rule of our own race; coming to full maturity only by slow degrees,†

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* Juvenal.

† The growth of a pike, under favourable circumstances, during the earlier portion of life, is occasionally at the rate of four pounds per annum; after twelve years he diminishes probably to one or two pounds; and lessens still more as age advances. When about five years old, he will eat every fortnight his own weight in gudgeons, and do ample justice to his food, by a proportionate increase in size and weight; when old, however, though his appetite may be as good, yet having then many parasites to maintain, the assimilation is not so perfect as in a younger fish.

his career of violence seems prolonged indefinitely; with strength and activity undiminished, and a voracity wholly unimpaired, 'for centuries he agitates, pursues, and destroys every living creature he meets;' and time, which loosens most things, seems only to tighten his teeth. The proceedings of this stealthy and greedy marauder are described with the fidelity of an eye-witness by the author of 'British Fish and Fisheries:' 'Shrouded from observation in his solitary retreat, he follows with his eye the motions of the shoals of fish that wander heedlessly along; he marks the water-rat swimming to his burrow, the ducklings paddling among the water-weeds, the dabchick and the moor-hen leisurely swimming on the surface; he selects his victim, and, like the tiger springing from the jungle, he rushes forth, seldom indeed missing his aim: there is a sudden rush, circle after circle forms on the surface of the water, and all is still again in an instant.' Though few things come amiss to our 'freshwater shark,' he too, like omnivorous man, has his preferences and dislikes; in the midst of a banquet of frogs, throw him a toad, and he turns from it loathing; put a slimy tench near his muzzle, and he will recoil from the nauseous creature; and if compelled by strong necessity to dine on a perch, he holds it whilst alive at jaw's length transversely under water; nor even when dead, and after he has very carefully put down the offensive spines, does he swallow it without manifest signs of reluctance and distrust. By old pikes, sticklebacks are held in yet greater abomination than perch, and not without good reason, seeing the havoc they commit amongst the young and unwary pickerels. It is only by personal suffering that fish any more than men ever buy wisdom; growing pikes no sooner begin to feel the cravings of hunger, and to find they have large mouths, well furnished with teeth on purpose to cater for it, than they proceed to make preliminary essay upon the smallest fish within reach;

these are commonly the gasterostei, or sticklebacks, who, observing the gaping foe advance against them, prepare for the encounter by bristling up their spines in instinctive readiness to stick in his throat, instead, as he supposes, of going smoothly down into his stomach. This induces a dreadful choking disease, which we venture to call sticklebackitis, by means whereof many a promising young jack is cut off 'in cunabulis.'* The old fish have as strong a predilection for certain provisions as a dislike to others. Amongst a great variety of *bonnes bouches* the following are ascertained to be to their taste —a swan's head and neck, a mule's nether lip, a Polish damsel's foot, a gentleman's (probably however no objection would be made to a lady's) hand; plump puppies just opening their eyes, and tender kittens of an age to pay the penalty attaching to a mother's indiscretion; besides every kind of fish, with the few exceptions just noticed.

As regards its culinary merits, no fish perhaps ever met, at different times and places, with a greater diversity of opinion than this: that of Ausonius, as we have seen, is strongly against it; and in his part of France, to this day brochets are considered unsavoury and plebeian: whilst at Châlons-sur-Saône, on the other hand, they are in high repute: in Italy pike are rarely eaten, and the Spaniards are said to reject them entirely: proceeding northward, their reputation rises; those from some of the German lakes are much esteemed, and others in our own country too (where this fish was once a great favourite) are held still, when taken out of clean waters,

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* On the symptoms and post-mortem appearances of sticklebackitis, which present some interesting analogies with those of œsophagitis, laryngitis, and croup, we reserve what may be said till we publish our Nosology of Fish, and are content here merely to invite attention of pathologists to the subject.

quite a treat.* During the reign of Edward the First (*i. e.* towards the close of the thirteenth century) jack was so dear that few could afford to eat it; the price, says Mr. Yarrell, was double that of salmon, and ten times higher than either turbot or cod. 'In 1466, pike was one of the chief dishes in the high church festival given by George Neville, Archbishop of York. In Henry the Eighth's time these watery tyrants fetched as much again as house-lamb in February, and a very small pickerel would sell higher than a fat capon.' In spite of the general wholesomeness of the fish, its roe has been said by some authorities to be deleterious, inducing (like that of the barbel) hypercatharsis and vomiting; but as pike are known to be *φαῦλοι κύοντες*, out of condition when spawning (as Aristotle indeed erroneously reports to be the case with most fish), gravid specimens are, we believe, very rarely put to the test at table. On the breeding of pike, Walton informs us that it occurs once a year, in the following manner:—'A he and a she usually go together out of a river into some ditch or creek, and then the spawner casts her eggs, and the milter hovers over her all the time she is casting her spawn, but touches her not.' The spawning season occupies from two to three months; the young pikesses of three years taking the lead, and when they have been all safely delivered, the dowagers, or frog pikes (so called from their period of spawning being late, with the frogs), succeed them.

Belone.

'Ραφὶς ἡ βελόνη καλεῖται καὶ ἀβλεννὴς, δίστομος, ἰγνὸς, εἴχυλος.†

Besides the familiarly known European pike, there are

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* Those caught in the Norfolk Broads are the best we know, whilst the smelt-fatted pike of the Medway are good to a proverb.

† Athenæus.

two North American species—the esox estor and the esox reticulatus (the last distinguished by a network of lines along the sides, which has suggested the name), both, like our own, inhabitants of fresh water. The sea also has its pikes, and to one of these we shall devote a few words. The esox belone, or gar-fish, is very common in the Mediterranean, and under the Greek name *ῥαφὶς βελόνη*, and its Latin equivalent *acus*, was well known to the ancients; though it must be admitted that they do not, under the same denomination, always speak of the same fish. Aristotle, for instance, as quoted in Athenæus, says of his belone, that it is 'smooth' and 'toothless,' which statement, as regards the odontics of the gar-fish, is the reverse of fact, and quite at variance also with what Oppian sings of a fish which he celebrates under the same name as Aristotle.

> Th' unwary belone's proceedings show
> What dire effects from vengeful anger flow:
> Safe through the net escaped, the spleenful throng
> Must needs return to recompense the wrong,
> When fatal threads the *pointed teeth* receive,
> And hold each victim fast without reprieve.

Giannetazzio also speaks of the sharp, penetrating teeth of belones, and of a plan yet successfully pursued at Naples of converting them into instruments for their capture.

> Burnish'd with blue, and bright as damask steel,
> Behold the belone with pointed bill,
> All fringed with teeth; no greedier fish than they
> E'er broke in serried lines our foaming bay.
> Soon as the practised crew this frolic throng
> Beholds advancing rapidly along;
> Adjusting swift a tendon to the line,
> They throw, then drag it glistening through the brine.
> Quickly the lure the snapping fish pursue:
> The gristle charms, but soon its charms they rue.
> Fix'd by the teeth to that tough barbless bait,
> The struggling suicides succumb to fate.

There can be little doubt, we think, that had Aristotle really intended this species under the designation *Βελόνη ῥαφὶς*, so accurate an observer would scarcely have failed to notice the full large orbs, patent nostrils, and lateral line of scales on each otherwise scaleless side, nor, finally, by any possibility could he have omitted to record those singular green bones of the spine which are peculiar to the gar-fish, and convey so unfavourable an impression of the owner, when seen for the first time at table.*

The modern Greek name is aulone, which sounds like, and probably is, a corruption from the old word *belone*; at Naples (more corrupted still) *aulone* becomes *angle*, *aule*; and this, we think, gives the true derivation of our cobbler's awl, a plebeian instrument indeed, but one which lays claim to a truly classic origin.† The gar-fish is indigestible, according to Dorion, one of the worthies

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* Our own introduction to the belone was at the miserable 'locanda' at Paestum, where a year before the ill-starred Mr. and Mrs. Hunt breathed their last, in consequence of wounds received from banditti in the neighbourhood. Fatigued and hungry as our party were after a long drive through the desolate region of malaria, wild buffaloes, wild birds, and yet wilder specimens of the human race, which here and there scarecrow the broad, sadly picturesque expanse between the last cork-trees near Salerno, and the treeless vicinage of the temple of Neptune, we dared not venture upon these fish with green bones,—the only dish served up for repast; and being previously taught to believe that the host of the squalid albergo was himself only a half reclaimed bandit, we all preferred bearing hunger, and traversing a second time the fiery plain unrefreshed, to breaking our fast upon such suspicious diet; little imagining all the while that it was our sagacity, and not the host's integrity, that was here at fault.

† The *βελόνη* of Aristotle, *γνάφιον* of Hippocrates, and *κεντήριον* of Galen, are words of the same import, designating severally an instrument by which prepared hides are pierced to introduce a thread in the process of manufacturing them into shoes. Dr. Johnson's derivation of awl is from the Goth. aal, Sax. æle, Germ. ahl; but whence aal?

of Athenæus; it is certainly poor, dry food, and seldom eaten from choice. Galen recommends it to patients suffering from renal affections. When first caught, this species, exhaling, as it does, a strong, peculiar, and disagreeable smell, is as unsatisfactory to the nose as either to eye or palate. The usual size is not above two feet, but Sir W. Hamilton mentions one taken at Naples which weighed fifteen pounds: specimens are sometimes seen in our own markets, but are seldom asked for.

Silurus Glanis.

Never was there a less 'callida junctura' of fish-names than in the above curious jumble of Greek and Latin nomenclatures. Aristotle, who first uses the word 'glanis,' describes under it an individual not unlike in several important particulars the S. glanis of modern times. Pliny next speaks of the silurus, and in several places attributes to it what Aristotle does to the glanis.* Ælian next considers the two names to belong to two different fish frequenting different rivers; and, finally, Athenæus, who agrees with Ælian, twice marks a distinction by mentioning them separately; from all which conflicting testimony this, at least, seems certain, that

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* The controversies and concessions of perplexed critics, caused by this confusion in the ancient nomenclature, is amusing. Poor Scaliger, having first asserted that the glanis and silurus were different fish, and the silurus certainly the sturgeon, next doubts, and lastly becomes convinced, that the silurus was unknown to Aristotle; and after breaking his head to reconcile what was quite irreconcilable, he offers Cardan, at last, to give up the controversy altogether, on one condition—viz. that if he himself consents no longer to dispute the identity of the glanis and silurus. Cardan, on his side, must forbear to teach or listen to others who would make him believe that the silurus was the sturgeon. 'Itaque,' says he, laying down the conditions, 'silurus sane esto qui et glanis, modo ne glanim quis dicat sturionem.'

the glanis and silurus not being the same fish, the modern silurus glanis must needs be an impostor, swimming about with a false passport, and personating two different individuals. Aristotle describes his glanis as an inhabitant of fresh water, of vast dimensions, easy to hook, but, on account of very strong teeth, not so easy to retain; as having a tail like that of the *κόρδυλος*;* as liable to divers mishaps; at the bottom to be attacked by the sea dragon, and on the surface to be star- and thunder-struck: as spawning ova the size of peas or vetches; and as showing much affection to the nascent progeny;† as only fit for food after the roe has been deposited; and, finally, as presenting this unusual culinary anomaly—the females are more delicate at table than the males. Pliny, speaking of the silurus, adds to all this (which in essential points agrees with the modern silurus glanis)‡ that 'he is a cut-throat whithersoever he goeth, a great devourer, and maketh foul work, for no living creature comes amiss to him; he setteth upon all indifferently, the very horses ofttimes as they swim he devoureth, and especially in Mœnis, a river in Germany, near to Lisboa, or Erlisbones;' Pausanias affirms

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* A small amphibious creature, utterly unknown; and so affording no assistance in determining what the glanis may be from a comparison of tails.

† The male continues, we are told, a close watch for forty or fifty days, during all which time he suffers no other fins to come near the brood; whilst the female kindly consents to give them up to his exclusive care and management.

‡ Ausonius, under the same name of silurus, describes a species of river-fish, of very large size, to which he gives the title of *mitis balæna*, or 'gentle whale;' this single epithet shows that Ausonius's glanis cannot be the glanis, which is *mighty* indeed, but not by any means 'mitis;' whilst his description of the progress of these balænæ in a body up the Moselle, leaves no ground for doubt that he has in this place some larger species of sturgeon in view.

that he will eat men as well as horses. Both these statements (exaggerations no doubt, and probably suggested by the great proportions and monster ugliness of the glanis or sheet-fish) are not wholly discountenanced by some remarkable recitals of comparatively modern authors, which certainly leave his character still under a cloud. Thus, from one individual mentioned by Sonnini, were recovered the stolen or strayed remains of a good-sized boy; from the paunch of another, which had fattened for sixteen years in a hole under a gentleman's kitchen, a man's hand, with three gold rings on the fingers, was pulled out; and though the 'corpus delicti' was not found upon his person, the circumstance of finding any part of a man stowed away in such a pantry was sufficient to create strong suspicion of violence and unfair play, especially when coupled with the Bohemian adage, which declares that, while other fish prey only on fish, this glanis preys upon everything, 'pisces pisci præda, at huic omnes.'

The silurus, to which rather numerous genus the present species belongs, are characterized, *inter alia*, by a strong spine, formed of the first ray of the pectoral fin, so articulated to the shoulder-bone that they can 'fix bayonets' and inflict very dangerous wounds; the mouth is cleft at the end of the muzzle, and the maxillaries, prolonged into barbels, come off from the lower jaw. This silurus glanis (the 'saluth' of the Swiss, the 'schad' of Germany, and the 'mal' of Sweden, in all which countries it abounds) is slimy like an eel, of a greenish colour, spotted with black above, and with yellowish-white underneath. He has an enormous head, small round eyes, covered with a membrane, and six barbels to the lower jaw, by means of which he contrives, after the manner of the lophius, to inveigle prey. The glanis' full stature is that of two grenadiers lying foot to foot; his weight reaches from three to four hundred

pounds; his mouth is a perfect *antrum*; and the throat capable of giving easy passage to a child *in transitu* to the stomach. He loves to lie lurking in the mud, either in some still hole of a river, or, according to Willughby, in some small, deep, dirty lake, never issuing from ambush except towards the spawning season, for the purpose of finding a safe spot where to deposit a new posterity. The sudden apparition of this unsightly creature on such occasions, rising from the mud,

> And each ferocious feature grim with ooze,

together with its large dimensions and vast strength, have long conspired to make it an object of superstitious terror; and much fear has probably also at last begotten some fictitious statements respecting a character which perhaps may not turn out quite so sanguinary as outward appearances and first impressions suggest. The glanis's strength, indeed, is herculean; and Aristotle's remark, that he is much 'easier to hook than to hold,' quite true; we find recorded of one huge Hungarian 'saluth,' that he drew his captors nearly three miles down a stream, leaping and plunging for hours, before he was sufficiently weakened and subdued for the fishermen to draw the body on shore. The rivers Elbe, Rhine, Volga, Vistula, Oder, Danube, and the Hungarian Tibiscus, all harbour and fatten enormous specimens of this remarkable and ill-favoured fish.

As food, the glanis has been highly spoken of; the flesh, agreeably white to the eye, is said to have the further advantage of being a rich, unctuous, pleasant, sweet-flavoured, and nutritious viand; such as epicures love.* The bons-vivans of Paris attempted accordingly at one time to naturalize this fish: fine live-stock were procured

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* The fat also is very delicate, and is used as a substitute for hog's lard.

from Suabia, and sent to that great mart of European luxury and national depôt of half the 'friandise' of France—the venerable city of Strasbourg, whence the markets of the metropolis were for a season duly supplied. Of late however, either owing to the fickleness of French taste, or to the fish having deteriorated, the practice has been given up, and the glanis is now never seen at restaurants, tables-d'hôte, or magasins de comestibles. The ancient world does not appear to have thought so highly of its merits as the modern, if indeed the proverb, 'a stinking silurus in a silver platter' (=a gold ring in a sow's snout) be really referable to the present species. As, however, the word silurus was employed very loosely by Latin writers to designate a variety of other fish, both large and small, and was sometimes restricted to a well-known worthless pisciculus,* perhaps the adage refers to this individual. Besides the above, and several other siluri of which, as unknown to the ancients, we forbear to speak, there is yet another species, a Brazilian fish, whose propensities are so singular as to demand notice, though they can only be given in the tongue in which Spix and Martius record them:—'Singulari instinctu incitatur in ostia excretoria corporis humani intrandi, quæ cum igitur in iis qui flumine lavant, attingit, summa cum violentia in-

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* To this, and not to the Suabian delicacy, Juvenal alludes in his well-known strictures against an itinerant fish-dealer who had risen from hawking about other people's siluri, to become a purchaser of mullet on his own account. No shoulders but those of Atlas could have borne the weight of one 'silurus glanis,' much less have carried about, as he did, *numbers* in a basket—'vendere municipes fracta de merce siluros.'

A fish like this, one single foot to raise,
Would take twelve men of our degenerate days;
A brace of heroes from the Trojan war
United scarce might lift it on the car.

Matron. parod.

cessit, ibique carnem, morsu appetens, dolores, imo vitæ periculum, affert : urinæ odore hi pisciculi valde alliciuntur, quam ob causam accolæ intraturi flumen Amazonium, cujus sinus hac peste abundat, præputium ligula constringunt, et a mingendo abstinent.'

Salmonidæ.

Et salmo pictus aureis frequens guttis
Extrema continentis ambiens Seræ,
Qua proditores pejerant Proamnatas,
Nostrasque dedignatus ingredi ripas,
Adversus obluctatur amni Garumnæ.

Scalig. in Ota.

With several members of the large family of Salmonidæ (easily distinguished by the second fatty dorsal fin) the ancients were doubtless acquainted. ÆElian, in a chapter entitled 'On an unusual mode of fishing practised in Macedonia,' speaks, as we have elsewhere noticed, of certain speckled fish, *ἰχθύες τὴν χρόαν κατάστικτοι* (the name he advises the curious to make out from the Macedonians themselves), which are secured, he says, by the device of an artificial fly called hippurus, for the due dubbing of which (not to encumber our text with too much Greek) the reader may consult the appended note.* That these speckled fish were some species of trout, is rendered extremely probable from the above mode of taking them. Menesitheus, in Athenæus, speaks of certain fish 'called pyruntes, excellent for the table, easy of digestion, and only found in clear, rapid, and cold streams:' which were also probably some kind

* *Οἷον τῷ ἀγκιστρῳ περιβάλλουσιν ἔριον φοινικοῦν, ἥρμοσταί τε τῷ ἐρίῳ δύο πτερὰ ἀλεκτρύονος, ὑπὸ τοῖς καλλέοις πεφυκότα, καὶ κηρᾷ τὴν χρόαν παρεικασμένα.* The line to which this was attached was four cubits, and the rod was of the same length as the line.

of trout.* It seems, too, all but certain that the thymalus of Ælian corresponds to the modern umbra,† or grayling; for, in the first place, a fish of this name, which he assigns to the Ticino and Adige, still continues to abound in both these rivers; secondly, the name itself, which he derives from the thyme-like odour exhaled by the thymalus, further countenances this view, as it accords perfectly with modern testimony concerning the fragrance of the grayling. 'Some think he feeds on water-thyme, and smells of it on first being taken out of the water,' says Walton. 'So sweetly scented is this fish's body,' writes St. Ambrose, 'as to have procured for one highly perfumed the compliment, that he smelt daintily like a flower or a fish' (unlike him in Shakspeare, who 'stunk of a very-ancient-and-a-fish-like smell'). Gesner, Rondolet, and others, bear similar testimony to the peculiar bouquet exhaled by a grayling just caught; thirdly, the 'size of the thymalus—a cubit in length—and its shape, like a mugil' are items neither of them inapplicable to the modern fish; and, fourthly, a last point of resemblance, which also helps very materially to establish the identity of the two, is the similar mode had recourse to by anglers in the capture of both. Every British angler knows that the favourite food of the grayling is flies:

> In quiet stream or still,
> His pannier he'll fill,

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* They may have been the common trout, the range of which is very extensive. Mackenzie, in a journey to explore the northern continent of America, caught trout within the polar circle; so did Sir John Franklin: they have been caught also near the source of the Amazon, three thousand miles from the sea.

† Ausonius has excellently described, in one line, the movements of this shy fish:—

> Effugiens oculis celeri umbra natatu.

Trout and grayling at flies
Are so ready to rise,

as Cotton instructs his readers; and the Greek sophist tells us, to the same purpose, that there is but one way for Piscator to take thymalus, and that is, to 'forego all the more ordinary fish-baits, and employ in place of them that troublesome little fly the conops, which night and day torments mankind by his buzzing and biting.* Using this for a lure, the sport is assured whenever there are any thymali in the neighbourhood.' Aldrovandi, citing the above passage from Ælian, marvels what hook could be fine enough to impale a gnat; and indeed it seems quite clear, that this author,—no great adept himself, apparently, in myology or fly-fishing,—has substituted, by mistake, the 'culex pipiens' for some other fly, more or less resembling it in shape—perhaps for the Mayfly itself!

It seems thus pretty certain, that the ancients knew some, perhaps many, members of the salmon family, though of that prince of river-fish—the glory and representative of this large family, the salmo salar, or salmon proper—they knew probably next to nothing, for the Greeks have left no notice of this species; and, though we know that many of their treatises on fish, where mention of the salmon may have occurred, have not come down to us, one can hardly imagine such a noble species, if known in Greece at all, should by any possibility have escaped the eyes of Aristotle, and the mouths of the host of deipnosophist fish-fanciers quoted in Athenæus. Among the Latins, Pliny is the only author who makes even cursory mention of the salar; and he does not speak of it as an Italian fish, but as frequenting

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* Κώνωπι δὲ αἱρεῖται μόνῳ πονηρῷ· μὲν ζώῳ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν καὶ νύκτωρ ἀνθρώποις ἐχθρῷ καὶ δακεῖν βοῆσαι· αἱρεῖ δὲ τὸν Θύμαλλον τὸν προειρημένον, φιλῆδεῖ γὰρ αὐτῷ μόνῳ.

the rivers Dordogne and Garonne in Aquitaine, to which rivers, before the days of 'kipper,* it would necessarily be confined, and the only knowledge of it be derived from the reports of French tourists visiting Rome. The first Latin poet who mentions the salmon under its present title is Ausonius :—

Nec te puniceo rutilantem viscere salmo†
Transierim ;

and elsewhere he distinguishes it by different names according to its age :—

Teque inter geminas species neutrumque et utrumque,
Qui necdum salmo nec jam salar ambiguusque
Amborum, medio Fario intercepte sub ævo.‡

Of the salar he writes in another place,—

Purpureusque salar stellatus tergora guttis.

Olaus Magnus pronounces a procession of salmon shin-

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* Kipper is salmon (previously well scoured and cleaned) that has received several dry rubbings of pepper and salt, and afterwards been dried either in the sun or else in the smoke of peat or of juniper-berries.

† 'Salmonis nomen a Germanis Rheni accolis vel Gallis Aquitanis (a sale ?) Latini accepere.'—*Willughby.*

‡ In those modern countries where salmon abounds, it is usual to designate it, as Ausonius has done, by a variety of names according to its age: this is the case in Germany, and also in some parts of England: thus Willughby tells us that of salars caught in the Ribble, those of the first year are called *smolts ;* those of the second year, *sprods;* those of the third, *trouts;* those of the fourth, *fox-tails ;* those of the fifth, *half-fish ;* and only after that period, *salmon.* It is not improbable that Ausonius may have mistaken, under the names salar and fario, different species of fish, as, till quite lately, the parr which abounds in some Scotch rivers, and notably in the Clyde, was erroneously supposed to be juvenile salmon ; indeed 'the similarity in the markings of many species of young trout still makes it very difficult to say of a given specimen whether it will turn to a grilse, a young bullhead, a salmon trout, a river trout, or a true parr.'—*Sir W. Jardine.*

ing in their glittering panoply of scales, and sweeping irresistibly onwards like an invading army apparently without intermission or end, as a spectacle well worthy of admiration. They have been noticed on these occasions to swim as wild geese fly—in a wedge; some large old salmoness forming the apex of the triangle, and the young males the base. When on a forced march they can proceed, according to some biographers, at the rate of thirty miles an hour;* 'and being,' as old Fuller says, 'both bow and arrow, will shoot themselves out of the water to an incredible height.' Mr. Twiss also, in his Travels in Iceland, witnesses that these fish are able to dart themselves nearly fourteen feet perpendicularly out of the water; he adds, that he remained for an hour witnessing this feat. Mr. Scrope however doubts the accuracy of all such statements, and it would appear, from his own observations, that he considers from six to seven feet to come much nearer the truth. This indeed

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* Drayton's Muse describes, in rather lagging, not very happy verse, the impetuous progress of these salars:—

When as the salmon seeks a fresher stream to find
(Which yearly by the sea comes hither of his mind,
As he in reason grows), and stems the watery tract
Where Tivy falling down doth make a cataract,
Forced by the rising rocks that there her course oppose,
As though within their bounds they meant her to enclose:
Here, when the labouring fish doth at the foot arrive,
And knows that by his strength but vainly he doth strive.
His tail takes in his teeth; and bending like a bow
That's to the compass drawn, aloft himself doth throw,
Then springing with his tail, as doth a little wand
That, bended end to end, and flirted from the hand,
Far off itself doth cast, so doth the salmon vaut;
And if at first he fail, his second somersaut
He instantly assays; and from his nimble ring
Still yesting, never leaves until himself he fling
Above the streamful top of the surrounded heap.

is probably the correct view, as it is founded upon actual measurement. Salmon, like swallows, are prone to return to their last year's quarters, but are easily diverted from this purpose, if in the interim any alteration has been made in the mouth of the river they usually frequent; and sometimes they will shy and bolt away at the sight of new edifices, erected too near the shore. Though northern fish, they do not like to bathe in over-cold water; but whether this be from any susceptibility of their own skins to chill, or merely a prospective precaution, unconsciously adopted for the benefit of an unborn progeny, must of course be conjectural; the fact itself, however, which is an interesting one, seems well attested. 'There are two rivers in Sutherlandshire,' writes Sir William Jardine, 'the Oikel, rising in a small alpine lake, and the Shin, tributary to Loch Shin, a large and deep lake connected with other deep lochs; in early spring, most of the salmon turn up the Shin, which is the warmer of the two, while very few prosecute the main current until a later period of the year.' In preparing for posterity the male and female appear to be alike, but not equally diligent; and the former not unfrequently, it is said, dies from sheer over-exertion. Whenever this happens, the female goes in quest of another mate, and when she has found him, returns to recommence those labours which the demise of her first partner had interrupted; they have been watched tracing furrows for the deposition of roe, full a foot and a half long: at this great work they toil perseveringly together, and in their eagerness often move stones of considerable size, wearing away both scales and ventral fins to effect the purpose; when the trench is completed, the female proceeds to deposit her eggs in it, and then both parents once again assist each other, filling up the channel by means of their very handy tails.

The salmon, like many other fish, appears to grow

rapidly for some years,* but afterwards more slowly; at two years old, they weigh six pounds; for the next three years, the aggregate increase of weight in the same fish is on an average perhaps not more than three and a half to four pounds, and later it is still less, so that those great Swedish salmon which, like Swedish turnips, are remarkable for size, and reach not unfrequently a hundredweight, are most probably of very great age indeed. We come now to the

Clupidæ, or Herring Tribe.

To this important family the ancient world was beholden for large supplies of excellent food, though not to the same extent as we are. Our herring, C. harengus, for instance, was totally unknown to them in any form; alive, it was an utter stranger to the waters of the Mediterranean, and the art of curing being of comparatively recent date, we may be sure that none of those galleys which bore Colchester oysters to Baiæ, and live scari

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* Experiments have been frequently made to ascertain the food most fattening for this and other members of the tribe Salmonidæ; and the results obtained have been, as might be anticipated from what is observed in our own race, extremely variable and uncertain: one thing clearly established is that even in health, with fishes as with man, it is impossible to infer what the amount of assimilation will be from the bulk of aliment received into the stomach; another inference is that light food affords more nourishment than heavy. Thus of three batches of the common trout, S. fario, fed differently on worms, minnows, and dark-coloured flies found on the surface of the water, those fed on the worms grew very slowly, and remained poor and lean; those brought up on minnows throve and grew apace; but those indulged with a copious supply of flies plumped out fastest, and were found to outweigh both the others put together; though it was ascertained that the whole mass of these museæ did not equal by a great deal the weight of either worms or minnows.

from the coasts of Crete, were ever freighted with a cargo of high-smoked 'Dutch reds,' or a consignment of 'Yarmouth bloaters.' It seems equally certain that the ancient Romans were unacquainted with our ichthyologic 'London pride,' the clupea alba (white bite, or bait), with which no degree of familiarity seems ever likely to breed contempt. Had the Roman epicures indeed been aware how dainty a little clupean inhabited our remote shores, all means would no doubt have been taken to transport it safe and sound to the Tiber: failing in which (as white-bait will not bear even a short journey) they would certainly have adopted Mahomet's method with the refractory mountain, and have embarked to make acquaintance with it on the banks of the Thames. As a set-off against this double deficit, the rivers of both Greece and Italy teemed with the fresh-water herring (alosa), whilst the Mediterranean everywhere yielded a superfœtation of both sardines and anchovies: on each of these we purpose presently to offer some remarks; but before doing so, feel called upon, as an Englishman and a herring-eater, to preface such brief notice, by a notice as brief, of clupea harengus, the illustrious head and representative of the family; an acquaintance with which suggests to those so privileged, the sentiment expressed in the French epitaph:

> Tu fus de ses amis peut-être?
> Pleure ton sort, et le sien.
> Tu n'en fus pas? pleure le tien,
> Passant, d'avoir manqué de l'être.

Everything connected with this fish, according to M. Lacépède, is ennobling or interesting: 'le hareng est une de ces productions dont l'emploi décide de la destinée des empires;' nor can it be denied that all men who tar their fingers in the clupean service, unlike those often employed in maritime expeditions, are public benefactors, and the agents of unmixed good. By them the

spirit of enterprise and commerce is largely promoted; by them whole nations are supplied with food; by them too all the cardinal virtues are fostered and maintained.* The propagation of herrings in foreign parts, but more especially of red herrings, being thus intimately connected with national prosperity, what honours, asks M. Lacépède, are not justly his due who first taught mankind 'the art of impregnating their solids with sea-salt'? The name of this illustrious but cacophonous benefactor of his kind was Wilhelm Deukelzoon;† and we are 'invited' by this lively author, not only duly to honour him ourselves, but to extend such admiration to all princes and potentates who have done homage to his memory, no matter what their previous history. A public visit to his tomb, and a statue decreed to his memory, were sufficient in the eyes of our red-herring enthusiast to whitewash the Austrian Charles of all previous moral stains and delinquencies; and he affectionately begs of posterity not to be censorious here, but rather to get rid of any unfavourable prejudices it may chance to have injuriously entertained against this great ruler, 'qui déposa l'orgueil de son diadème, courba sa tête victorieuse devant son tombeau, et rendit un hommage public à son importante découverte, l'art de pénétrer le hareng de sel marin!' The bare mention of this savoury discovery suffices not

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* 'Men-of-war and merchantmen,' writes Sir R. L'Estrange, 'consume men and breed none; the collier brings up now and then an apprentice, but still spends more than he makes: the only and common nursery of seamen is this fishery, where every buss brings up (it may be) six, eight, or ten new men every year, so that our fishery is just as necessary to our navigation as to our safety and well-being. And it is well observed that all princes are stronger or weaker at sea according to the measures of their fisheries.

† By others, Wilhelm Bueckelins, of about the same date, is put forward as the real original herring-salter.

only to excite the susceptibilities of a Frenchman's stomach, but all his national vanity as well; that innate exorbitant vanity which claims for his country universal supremacy, admitting very little competition; and owning no foreign superiority anywhere, or in anything,—in the rival achievements of killing men or women by war or gallantry; in science, literature, diplomacy; in the fine arts of sculpture, poetry, and painting; in the ornamental ones of dressing, wigging, and perfuming the living body, and in embalming and burying the dead with taste and sentiment; and finally, in all the useful arts, from transcendental cookery down to humble corn-cutting, and the smoking of a herring: 'Let us who are Frenchmen (loquitur Lacépède), whilst we show ourselves perfectly disposed to render homage where it is due, never forget that although it was a citizen of Biervliet with whom first originated the excellent idea of salting and barrelling herrings; a citizen of Dieppe first taught the world another at least equally important art —how they might be smoked.'*

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* All assertions like the above, touching the first curing of herrings, must be taken with a grain of salt, as a smoky obscurity hangs over that interesting epoch; we do not know indeed for certain when the world and herrings first became acquainted. Dion Cassius mentions that the northern coasts of England were abundantly supplied with fish, but that, owing to some foolish superstition, these islanders never tasted their 'marine stores.' They therefore ate no herrings in his day. Solinus, A.D. 200, says the inhabitants of Scotland derived at that time their principal support from fisheries (which we may presume to have been, as now, chiefly clupean). At the beginning of the twelfth century, a great jump in time, there were 'herring-fisheries in the Baltic, to which many foreign vessels resorted;' these herrings must therefore have been *salted*. In 1290, part of the dried fish shipped at Yarmouth, in the victualling of a vessel to bring the infant Queen of Scotland from her Norwegian sire, were *herrings*, and these of course were cured. In 1385 (Edward III.) mention is made of

Much, but to little purpose, has been written about the migrations of these fish: Pennant, who derives the word herring from the German *heer*, a host,* (purposely, it should seem, to put himself at its head, as leader,) has pretended, with much more precision than accuracy, to define their exact line of march. After wintering under the Arctic ice, and fattening on an abundant supply of crustacean food, they pour forth, he asserts, every spring, dividing into two vast hordes, which, proceeding southward, furnish abundant entertainment to the various inhabitants of the seas through which they glide, and the lands they coast. This mighty exodus and vast voyage of herrings from the Arctic circle to our own shores, thus confidently advanced by Pennant and Anderson, was currently believed, till lately, by most naturalists, and even the illustrious Cuvier gives credence to it; but much, if not the whole, of these long, interesting, and minutely described wanderings, are as imaginary as Sinbad's voyages, or the rambles of Gulliver; herrings, in short, like mackerel, lie generally at great depths, indeed, but near home, and come into shoal water at the breeding season, for the purpose of casting their spawn where the warmth and light of the sun exercise a quickening influence in hatching. What mainly countenances

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some *white* herrings found in vessels captured by the Cinque Ports; and in the same reign *red herrings* also are specified by name, so that both sorts of curing were practised before the great Deukelzoon was born: probably he improved the process, and so came in for more κῦδος than was his due. The conversion of 'white salt' into 'red herrings,' like most other great discoveries, was, it seems, accidental. Nashe, in his 'Lenten Stuffe,' says, 'that a fisherman having hung up some herrings in smoke, which were white as whalebone, found them, when he next looked, red as lobsters.'

* Moule derives it from 'hairang,' an old French word for a troop or army.

this view is, that our herring is seldom if ever seen in the extreme North: the clupea abounding there being, in fact, a much smaller fish,* which do not visit our coasts; and what still further corroborates its accuracy, is that the true harengus occurs on the western shores of Ireland, in August, before appearing in higher latitudes. The uncertain movements of these fish along a coast are highly curious and interesting; but as to the precise objects sought or attained by them in their fitful wanderings, we have not (any more than in those of gipsies) a real clue to guide us. 'Here today, and,' without any assignable cause, 'gone tomorrow,' is a privilege they for ever claim and act upon, repairing in vast numbers for many years to some favourite haunt, and then suddenly abandoning it, to appear in some other spot, previously unvisited. These singular flittings have indeed appeared so inexplicable, as to induce the belief in some persons that it was a duty to explain them; and gunpowder and steam, *inter alia*, were accordingly brought in to account for such vagaries. It has been gravely said that the cannon of Copenhagen drove herrings from the Baltic; and among the Hebrides, where this popular super-

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* The common herring seems unknown in Greenland. The Greenlanders' most common food is the *augmarset*, or small herring, near half a foot long, a kind of lodden, called by the Newfoundlandmen *capelin:* the back is dark green, the belly silver white; like herrings they swim into the bays in such quantities, to lodge their spawn on the rocks, that the sea looks black, and is ruffled or curled. Their first appearance is in March or April, and the common gull betrays the position of the shoal. They spawn in May and June, and this is the Greenlanders' harvest, when whole boatfuls are taken in a few hours, with a hoop-sieve, knit with sinews. They are dried on rocks in the open air, and then packed and laid by for winter.' Cured capelins are to be procured in London; they are not a bad relish for breakfast, but wholly inferior to herrings.

stition still obtains, no one is allowed to discharge a gun during the fishing season: opposed to the wisdom of such restrictions, Smith and Griffiths mention, in one of their instructive supplements to Cuvier's 'Pisces,' that, though 'no shot has perhaps been fired in the Western Islands since the days of Cromwell, they have on that coast many times changed quarters.' As to the non-interference of steam-boats in determining the erratic proceedings of herrings, though the keels of a hundred of these vessels have now for many years daily traversed the Scotch lochs, where they most abound, no deficiency has as yet has been observed in the supplies. On one part of the Irish coast, where these fish had formerly abounded, but suddenly left, without notice of their intentions, the peasantry explained the matter, to their own satisfaction, thus:—A new clergyman, on taking possession of his living, had been heard openly to declare an intention of tithing the produce of the sea, at which imprudent notice the herrings took huff, and never again showed their scales there during his incumbency. Easy as it may be thus to pronounce what has not, it is impossible to say what has to do with the migratory movements of any fish, while the difficulty of studying the economy of herrings, since they are too delicate for manipulation, is greater in regard to them than it is with almost any other species: the only thing which appears certainly made out about these peripatetics, is that their corps, in whatever direction it moves, and at whatever time it may be on the march, is always preceded, for some days, by a small advance-guard of males, sent thus before, no doubt, as pioneers to the main body.

Of the enormous consumption of herrings we cannot form any adequate estimate; it is the most productive of all fisheries,* and yet the total amount consumed by man

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* In some inconsiderable creek of the Norway coast, more than

forms but a very small item as compared with the wholesale havoc committed by birds and predatory fish; for these luckless clupeans have the misfortune to be exceedingly palatable both to winged and finned cormorants, as well as man, against whom they are equally unable to protect their dainty bodies. Betrayed by the oily phosphorescence they exude, and the plungings of marine monsters, and flocks of sea-mews which accompany the shoal, their exact whereabouts is clearly pointed out to the fisherman, who is thus enabled to make good his claim for a share of the booty. Yet notwithstanding all that thus perish by the persecution of so many different foes, no sensible diminution is made in the dense shoals, as they float from shore to shore.

Whilst many nations are largely benefited by their herring-fishery, none have turned them to such profitable account as the Dutch. In Holland, where the laws imposed upon this department of the marine are very wisely conceived and strictly enforced, they may truly be said to contribute largely to the wealth of the state. On setting out for the expedition, the sailors pledge themselves not to let down a net before the twenty-fifth

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twenty millions have been the product of a single fishery. Bloch computes that the Gothenburgians, in Sweden, alone catch seven hundred millions, which will make but a small figure if compared with the united takes of all the fishermen of Holstein, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, France, Ireland, Scotland, England, the United States, Kamtschatka, and, above all, of Holland, where the crews, instead of awaiting the arrival of the herrings on their coasts, proceed, in large fleets, to meet them in the open sea. 'Thomas Nash quaintly assumes,' says Moule, 'in his herrings' tayle, that this fish brought more ships to Yarmouth alone than were assembled at Troy to bring back Helen.' Let us add that thus it ought to have been, their object being at once more dignified and useful. One cask of herrings was worth a whole shipload of such loose fish as Helen.

of June, nor after the first of January; nor, during the fishery, when the herring is in its prime, to make use of any nets but such as are of the size of mesh regulated and fixed by government: and that they will adopt every precaution to secure to the Dutch herring the pre-eminence it has always enjoyed.*

The herrings taken differ very much in goodness even in the same haul, and being carefully sorted, are rubbed with finer or coarser salt according to their merits.† The salt, which is procured from Spain, is first dissolved to get rid of impurities, and the solution subsequently evaporated in the sun; the crystals thus obtained are of different sizes: the prime fish are treated with 'gros sel,' and the inferior with 'petit sel;' and the greatest care is taken never to mix the two together. The dimensions of every pickling cask, and the seasoning also of the wood, are under strict surveillance; and a man would be held a traitor to his country who should put one poor fish in a barrel devoted to the superior kind, or disobey in the minutest particular a beneficent code of laws, framed alike for the advantage of himself and of the world at large; a big official seal stamped upon each barrel *coronat opus*, and vouches to the public that no precaution

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* Some people prefer the Norwegian herring, from the peculiar flavour imparted to them by the pine-casks in which they are packed.

† Our Norfolk and Suffolk fishermen make a sixfold division of those taken. The pick of the whole are,—1st, Harengus pinguis, the fattest and finest; 2nd, the H. carnosus, or meat herring, less fat, but equal in size to the last; 3rd, H. nocturnus, night herring, of a medium size, neither fat nor very meaty; 4th, H. ruptus—pluck—those hurt in the net, and either burst or bruised before coming to hand; 5th, H. vacuus, a shotten herring, lean from recent confinement; and 6th, H. acephalus, which has left its head at the other side of the net, 'to tell the cruel death it died.'

has been neglected nor pains spared; and if it should ever happen (but it never has nor will) that a bad barrel bore such a seal, the national faith of Holland would be considered irretrievably compromised. The finest herrings are always those selected for curing, and this curing is of two kinds: the first consists only of a slight salting and subsequent bronzing in the smoke; in the other more salt is rubbed in, and the smoke employed for the after process is more dense, and continued a much longer time; during the operation the herrings distil *guttatim* much phosphorescent fatness.*

Our English herrings are, we believe, as good as any Dutch; few equal, and none can surpass in flavour a 'Loch Fine' fresh; whilst for those who like savoury salt provisions, surely a Yarmouth bloater† may safely stand comparison with either Dutch or any other foreign bronzed clupean of distinction.

In heraldry the herring has been borne by the Kent family Herringot on the ancestral seal, as far back as Henry III. Gules cruselly, three herrings hauriant, argent, are the arms of Archbishop Herring, who, to pass from Grave to *Gay*, preached against the 'Beggars' Opera,' and so added the weight of his opposition to its success.

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* Each herring yields $\frac{1}{2\frac{1}{2}}$ of its weight in oil. Of this oil Commodore Billing says that it is very clear and very sweet, and good to preserve eggs in; it is commonly clarified and used for lamps, and the residuum employed for manure. Sometimes the whole herring is so used, in which case it cannot be ploughed in too fresh for want of this precaution; indeed, a whole crop of wheat has turned out so rank and fishy, as to be quite unsaleable. In Cornwall, where the pilchard-herrings are used fresh, the land, however sterile it was, becomes forthwith fertile, and the crops as fine as they are abundant.

† Yarmouth sends one hundred herrings, says Mr. Yarrell, baked in twenty pies or pasties, to the Sheriffs at Norwich, to be delivered to the clerk of the royal kitchen. The Popes are equally partial to them, and recommend them largely to the

Alose.

Θρίσσα, καὶ τὰ ὁμογενῆ, εὐναδοτος.

There can be little doubt that the *θρίσσα* of the Greeks,—so called *ἀπὸ τῶν τρίχων*, from the number of fine bones which intersect its flesh, as they do that of most members of the Clupean family,—is the same fish as the modern shad. Few species have been at once so lauded and abused; and though caprice may have not a little to do in settling the culinary merits of any article of diet (as of many other things besides), yet, here at least there seems good reason for a discrepancy of opinion; for the same kind of alose, taken at sea in winter, is a dry, poor fish, becomes, after a month's sojourn in fresh water in spring, a very sapid, plump, and delicate one; besides it is now generally agreed that there are two distinct species of equally common *θρίσσα*; frequenting the same streams at nearly the same period of the year, and only to be known at market (at table they are easily distinguished) by a difference in size, and by the presence or want of some rows of very small delicate teeth. There can be little doubt, therefore, that both in ancient and more recent times, the two have been frequently confounded; and the report would be favourable or the reverse, according to the kind tried,* for most persons are agreed as to the excellence of the larger, or alice

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faithful; hence the papacy has warm supporters in the fishermen at Yarmouth and Lowestoft, who drink

'Here's to his Holiness the Pope, with his triple crown,
With nine dollars each, for each cask in the town.'

* The Russians, not generally supposed to be squeamish in their diet, entertain a prejudice against alose; and prefer, it is said, not to find it in their nets: whenever this occurs, they hand it over to the Tartars for the smallest, or even without any compensation. The Arab plan of dealing with this shad is to dry-smoke after the manner of herrings, and to eat them with dates.

shad; and no one has yet been found to advocate the smaller or finta shad. Both species occur in the Severn, where a corresponding difference of price marks the different estimation in which they are there held. Many rivers on the continent are said to fatten remarkably fine alose; amongst them are the Garonne, Rhine, Elbe, and Volga; to these we would add the Loire and the Tiber; particularly the first, whence about Tours, Amboise, and Blois, we have eaten as plump, palatable specimens, as any elsewhere met with, and scarcely inferior in flavour to salmon. The alose, or thrissa (for we know not by which name it was designated at the time), forms one of an elaborately finished group of mosaic fish, in a house at Pompeii: it was therefore known to the Balbi and their contemporaries; but whether they appreciated it as much as the bons-vivans of ancient Greece, or disparaged it like Ausonius, as a mere 'solatium pauperis'—'the pauper's alose from the sputtering stall,'—is more than we can undertake to settle; but as it occupied the skilful fingers of ancient mosaicisti, and is still considered a fine fish at Naples,* we are inclined to think it was held in like estimation by the connoisseurs of the same *regno* under the ancient régime.

A love for music and dancing have been imputed to this 'fresh-water herring' from the times of the Professor of Philosophy at Stagyra, to those of the Professor of of Medicine at Montpelier: Aristotle affirms that he no sooner catches the sound of music or sees dancing, than, like Crabbe's Sailor, 'who hears a fiddle and who sees a lass,' he is irresistibly led to join the sport, and to cut capers and throw summersets out of the water, *ἀναπη-*

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* The Neapolitan markets are supplied principally from the river at Capua, when the fish, after leaving the bay, gives itself up to luxurious living, and soon becomes fat and heavy, and in good condition for the table.

δᾶν ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης. Ælian, following up this hint, declares, like a sophist as he is, that the sprightly conduct imputed to the shad by Aristotle, is well known to fishermen, who, taking advantage of it, fasten little bells to their nets, by the tinkling of which above the surface, all the alose within hearing are attracted to the spot, and netted without difficulty: another famous romancer of much later date than Ælian, Rondolet, repeating this story with slight variations, is not afraid to corroborate the accuracy of it by relating a little Orphean adventure of his own, so sprightly, that if not true, it ought to be. When staying at Vichy, (probably on some occasion in which he had suspended the use of its sodaic waters, for champagne,) he took a walk with some friends, partly 'pour promener ses ennuis,' and partly in quest of alose, along the banks of the Allier, with a kit in his hand ready for a serenade. The air was still, the moon and stars blinked propitiously over-head, and when the party had come to a favourable spot for the operation, a retiary apparatus was carefully drawn across the stream by his companions, whilst the violinist put the instrument to his chin, and struck up a lively waltz. A wonderful effect ensued. Scarcely had he drawn his bow (a very long one, we presume) across its bridge of sighs, when the sleeping surface of the waters began to move; alose backs appeared rippling the silvery expanse, and after a few strokes a large party of fish might be seen, all rising rhythmically on their tails, and leaping out of the river together. The ball was kept up with spirit so long as there were any fish within hearing to dance to the kit.

Long as he scraped the fascinating string,
Rapt into air the silvery alose spring;
And jovial friends, with net to break their fall,
Join'd in the dance, and hail'd the heavy haul.

A curious and better ascertained trait of these fish is

the great love they have for salt water, which lasts during the whole of their forced sojourn in a river; strong enough to induce them to follow a barge laden with their favourite commodity, for the sake of the briny droppings that escape *en route;* thus they follow the Seine salt-boats in spring all the way to Paris.

Anchovy.

This species was to the ancient world what the herring is to the modern, compensating in some degree for its inferiority to the last while fresh, by surpassing, when cured, the very herring itself, as a relish; and furnishing the materials for the finest fish-sauce either on record or in use. The ancient anchovy was known under a variety of names, some definite and specific, others more general and vague; the same author employing indiscriminately sometimes one, sometimes another. Ælian introduces it to notice under three different designations: first, *λυκόστομα,* or 'wolf-mouth' (under which name Gillius affirms it is still asked for in Greece); secondly, *ἐγχρασίχολος,* fellicops, the 'gall-i'-th'-head;' and thirdly and lastly, *ἐγγραυλὶς,* a word which some etymologists suppose to be a mere cutting down of the last, either for the sake of euphony, as in French Aulus Gellius becomes Aule Gelle, Rinaldo, Renaud, etc.; or else, to save time, and for greater glibness of speech, as with a certain class of our English community, who prefer to call an omnibus by its last syllable, to pervert gentlemen into 'gemmen or gents,' and to cut down the solemn prolixity of an affidavit into the more colloquial dissyllable 'davy.' Oppian, in one of his Halieutics, mentions the anchovy under Ælian's third appellative *ἐγγραυλὶς,* and a few lines further on under that of Apua (*ἀφύης ἀδινοῦ γένος*), which phrase might be freely translated, the 'numerous race of bastards,' *ἀφύη* being intended to express all fish

abnormally conceived and clandestinely born.* Ælian's account of the anchovy is brief, but correct; they are, he says, a diminutive, prolific, and very white little fish;† 'they swim in immense banks, called by the Greeks *βόλοι*; each *βόλος* containing individuals enough, *ὥς φασιν οἱ θαλαττουργοί*, on the credit of seafaring men, to fill fifty fishing-smacks (*ἁλιάδας*); the mass is moreover so dense and serried, that ships plough through without permanently breaking or dispersing them. The injuries sustained by the shoal from this close packing are very great: on inspecting a sample, it will be found there are as many heads without tails, tails without heads, and bodies without either, as perfect fish.'

The fresh anchovy was not esteemed a luxury by either Greeks or Romans.

> Cui portat gaudens ancilla paropside rubra
> *Alecem*, sed quam illa vorat,

says Martial of some half-starved girl, who was glad in her straits to devour anything, even down to an anchovy; Columella also mentions them as little good-for-nothings, fit only as bait for stock-ponds. This species is not confined to the Mediterranean. John Collins, in his treatise upon 'Salt and Salted Fish,' says it is often taken off the coast of Wales, and is scarcely inferior to the Italian: which is meagre praise. Like all the tribe, it is very strong-scented, requiring, after eating it, a well-ventilated room, with open doors and windows. In

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* This Greek epithet, *aphua*, 'unborn,' translated into the Italian equivalent *non-nati*, is that employed by the lazzaroni of Naples to designate young anchovies, and a variety of other *piccoli pesci* of whose origin and parentage they are uncertain.

† Μικρὰ ἰχθύδια πολύγονα φίσει λευκότατα ἰδεῖν. The exceeding *whiteness* of surface here mentioned makes one wish for authorization to change λυκόστομα, the 'wolf-mouth,' into λευκόσωμα, 'the white body,' especially as anchovies do not gape at all like wolves.

Italy, such escape is frequently debarred the consumer of anchovies, for the odour is yet worse out-of-doors than in; at every step the nose is assailed from open tubs (round which flies buzz their pleasure), with an organized anchovy atmosphere, always offensive, but in hot weather worse (though that be bad enough) than the potent garlic which fills every church with its fumes, and poisons the rising incense. The ancient Greeks, whose palate was certainly depraved, had some perception of odours left, and did not approve of the one in question. A comic poet cited by Athenæus, speaking of a favourite fish-cry in his day, which might be rendered, ''Chovies! 'chovies! sweet honey 'chovies!' sarcastically recommends the hawkers of Hybla and Hymettus confectionery to try their success with the public in a rival mellifluous ditty, 'Honey! sweet honey! come out with your money. And buy my sweet 'chovy, sweet 'chovy honey.'

The Sardina, so called from the island of Sardinia (which has given a name to more than one famous alumnus of its coast), was a salt luxury in high repute long before men had found out the art of saturating it with fine oil, and preserving it in a bath of the same, hermetically sealed in boxes. It is mentioned by Epicharmus' muse as among the friandise served at Hebe's wedding breakfast; and as Galen has pronounced 'Sardica salsamenta' to be the pleasantest of relishes, and Apicius has entered it in his famous book of recipes as a fit subject for *farcie;* it was doubtless in one of these forms a favourite *mets* at most opsophagists' tables.

Three sardines or, on a bend azure, are the arms of the French family Sartine; azure, a bend or, charged with three sardines sable, are the arms of the Neapolitan family Quarracino. Its English equivalent, the sprat; argent, a chevron sable, between three sprats azure, are the arms of the Sprats of Derbyshire.*

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* Moule.

CHAPTER XVI.

GADEANS AND PLEURONECTS.

Cod, Gadus.

IN no one family of the deep are the deficiencies of the ancients, when brought into comparison with the exuberant produce of our own markets, so strikingly exemplified as in that of the cod and his next of kin. With the cod proper (Gadus morrhua), the haddock (G. æglefinus), dorse (G. merlangus), coal fish (G. carbonarius), pollack (G. pollachius), ling or turbot (G. lota), they had no acquaintance whatever; indeed, with the exception of the hake, which abounds in the Mediterranean, and is an excellent fish wherever it swims, together with a few delicate but pigmy codlings of its own,* almost all the better members of the family repudiating the tepid waters of this sea,† scarcely offer to the cooks and connoisseurs inhabiting its shores any individuals worthy a sauce. But though ancient kitchens saw no specimens of the élite of the Dogger Bank or Newfoundland, we

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* Two of the best-known of these are the G. minutus, which is hawked about Naples (with another minute pisciculus of the next family of *flats*, the *platessa nuda*, with which it is taken in large quantities under the well-known cry of *fichi* and *succe*), and secondly *masdeu di funnali* (Phycis Mediterranea), which looks not unlike a tench, and is, as its name imports, peculiar to this sea.

† It seems a singular though it is a certain fact, that the luxurious and warm waters of the Mediterranean, in place of improving the fishy fibre, generally deteriorate it.

cannot consent to pass over some of the more interesting species wholly *sub silentio*; and as in speaking of the clupean race we felt ourself imperatively called upon not to give herrings the go-by, albeit unknown both to Greek agora and Latin forum; so here, prefatory to a notice of the classic gadus merlucius, or hake, we shall pause to make some observations on the pot-bellied *gastrocharybdic* cod, and on one or two other favourite species of the race, to which, salted or fresh, mankind is almost as much indebted as to the cod itself.

Some of the gadean etymologies are so strange, that we cannot forbear giving the reader a sample of them. *Γάδος* (Gr.) and gadus (Latin) are said to come from the Syrian word *gad* = fish; and there is in corroboration of this etymology an apocryphal Syrian Queen Atergadis, mentioned in Athenæus, and whose name imports Venus-fish. The word, which was thus general at first, and included all fish, was next restricted by the Greeks and Romans to a particular species of the present group, and then again, by a third caprice of nomenclature, made to stand for a whole genus in modern ichthyology. With regard to our trivial name for the *caput* of this tribe, 'the word cod,' says Cuvier, (what cars some naturalists must have!) 'is derived from gadus, which it *resembles in sound*.' Cod meant originally a purse, or *πήρα*, and the fish was so called, says an ingenious finder of strange similitudes, 'ab aliqua marsupii similitudine.' *Aliqua*, indeed! *Morue*, its French equivalent, comes, says Belon, from the English *merwel*, a word which, like Cuvier, we are unable to find in any English author of our acquaintance. According to Aldrovandi, the word *morrue* is a Marseillais patois for a person with thick blubber-lips, and is thence applied by metonymy to a fish like the cod, whose labial appendages are in character with one of this description. Being unacquainted with Marseillais patois, and warned by Belon's mistakes of the perils of dabbling

in foreign etymologies, we leave the responsibility of this to the manes of the literary executors of the venerable *ci-devant* professor of natural history of Bologna. Ægilfinus, the modern Latin designation for the haddock, is, according to the dictum of 'Rondolet and another,' from the English words *eagle* and *fins*, which, as eagles do not commonly exhibit these appendages, we take leave to doubt; *hadou*, the French for *salt haddock*, is evidently our own word gallicized. Of the trivial name of 'that most delicate of all gadeans,'* the dorse, the meaning has not, that we are aware, been even attempted; callarias,† its present Latin designation, is also a classic name, though incorrectly *endorsed* upon the species. The whiting is evidently so called from the silvery whiteness of its abdomen and under flanks; merlangus, its ichthyologic name, comes of course from *merlan*, but whence that comes still wants interpretation. Belon makes an amusing blunder regarding the nomenclature of the G. carbonarius, a species next akin to this fish: in order to contrive a plausible derivation, he is necessitated first to mis-spell it, and for 'coal' to read from a private manu-

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* Cuvier.

† There is a fish, perhaps a gadean, mentioned Pliny, and called by him callarias, which some have supposed to be the haddock. Apprised of this, and going for a brief sojourn to the city of the Clyde, an easy etymologist might readily persuade himself that the never-ceasing cry of 'caller haddie' under his window was tautological, and that call was the Scotch mode of pronouncing callarias, as haddie stood for haddock: *vox et præterea!* The haddock was unknown to Pliny, not being a Mediterranean fish. There is also another gadean, a Rhine fish not unlike the haddock, which those of the district salt and dry much after the manner of the Scotch. They call it *aberdamum*: and here again a too confiding etymologist, on first seeing a spread-eagled ægilfinus fresh smoked from *Aberdeen*, would probably seek to connect the two words, though he would of course only lose his time, as is often done over such mere coincidences of sound.

script of his own 'colle,' or glue fish; and having got thus far ('ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte') he ingeniously wonders why this particular species should be selected to receive a name from this substance, which it only yields in common with so many other individuals, several of whom furnish it in yet more copious supplies. Cuvier says that coal-fish is derived from *colin*, a word by which French sailors are in the habit of designating it; and this would do very well if the dark brown hue of the body, whence the northern words *kohl* and coal-fish, and the corresponding Latin word *carbonarius*, used by Linnæus for the species, were not a better and the obvious one. Having fished for the pollack's (G. pollachius) name for some time to no purpose, we give it up: as to the *unde derivatur* of the word burbot (a fresh-water gadean), we are equally without information; lastly, no fitter or more characteristic name than Merlucius, or sea pike, could have been devised for the all-voracious fish that bears it. Having now called over the whole muster-roll of names belonging to the present section, we proceed to introduce a few to our readers; and first the Gadus morrhua, or Cod.*

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this most serviceable fish: 'When,' writes an accomplished author, 'towards the commencement of the tenth century, Gaspard de Corte Real (a Portuguese gentleman, jealous of the Spaniards, and their rival in the desire of discovering new countries) cast anchor in the midst of the fogs of the savage coasts of a sterile island, and landed for the first time in Newfoundland, he certainly did not think that he was opening for Europe a source of riches

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* Sable, a chevron between three cod-fish naiant, argent, are borne as arms by the family of Codd; and azure, three cod-fish naiant in pale, argent, are the arms of the family of Beck.—*Moule.*

more profitable, equally certain, and far less inexhaustible, than those which the proud rivals of his nation derived from the mines of Potosi, the conquest of which had been effected with such effusion of blood; but the fact has so turned out, and a fish in other respects by no means remarkable, has become, in the hands of almost every nation in Europe, the origin of one of their most assured and lucrative branches of commerce.' Though Newfoundland was thus discovered, and afterwards visited by the Norwegians as early as the tenth and eleventh centuries, its fishy depths appear to have remained generally unexplored, and its very existence on the globe for the most part lost sight of, until the region was once more revisited in the year 1497, by one John Cabot, in the pay of Henry VIII., who thereupon imposed on the whole territory, island and mainland, the same name which is at present confined to the island exclusively. Cabot not only re-found the land, but discovered the cod; and on communicating the intelligence at home, many nations, as well as our own, speedily began to reap advantage from it, setting up extensive lines of fisheries along the east and south coasts of the island. Nor was the sea alone a source of profit to these hardy 'ancient mariners;' the island itself was for a time was found to be rich in bears, beavers, red foxes, martens, and hares, and a profitable trade was carried on with the Indians for the skins of these animals, which were then shipped to Ceylon. At first, deterred by the fears of a winter's campaign in this inhospitable region, no one seems to have thought of residing permanently at Newfoundland; by degrees, however, men took courage, and made one or two attempts, which, though in themselves failures, led ultimately to others whereof the issue was more fortunate, and success at last complete. The first Englishman who essayed to make Newfoundland his winter-quarters was a merchant named Hoare, who after encountering great hardships

was at length compelled to give up the attempt, and to return to England. In 1583, a half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh made a second attempt, with five vessels and two hundred people, to establish a colony there; but his failure was yet more signal and disastrous than the first had been, ending in the total loss of the crews. In 1623, Sir George Calvert, afterwards Lord Baltimore, actually formed a colony in the south-eastern part of the island, which he called Avalon, and over which he appointed his son governor. As this gentleman is reported to have repaired thither in order that he 'might freely enjoy the profession of the Catholic religion,' he could not have selected a spot more congenial to his views. The fogs of Newfoundland would no doubt be a subject for daily penance; and if he were opsophagist by inclination as well as from conscience and necessity, he might addict himself to an innocent and unrestricted use of cod and salmon all the days of his life.

Under our most religious and gracious King 'Carlo Dolce' the Second, a tax which the French had hitherto paid to England in acknowledgment of our courtesy in letting them fish there, was abrogated, and our flourishing cod trade, which had at one time occupied eight thousand hands, and given employment to two hundred vessels, began to stagger, whilst that of France throve in proportion, which made our *Gallic* neighbours all cock-a-hoop; but Englishmen are not so easily bullied out of their rights: 'Dieu et mon droit' is a motto which we do not write up everywhere in large letters for nothing; and this was a lesson in which John Bull was determined to instruct both a gracious king and his graceless favourites. A princely cod merchant, in 1676, took with him one hundred and two twenty-gun ships, and two ships of war, and in spite of French fortification succeeded in a capture of so many (*not* Frenchmen, but) cod, as brought him in no less a sum than £386,400. What

France could not effect by open force she next attempted by covert encroachments; and in spite of the treaty of Utrecht, which had awarded Newfoundland to the English, 'la grande nation' again outwitted us, for in 1721 she had in her employ no less than four hundred vessels trading in cod, which quite eclipsed our own, and chiefly supplied foreign markets with French *morue*. Emboldened by success, they took, in 1762, during our third George's reign, forcible possession of the island, but had only salted their cod in peace for one year, when it was again wrested from them by the English. After various altercations on both sides, the modern Gauls at length fired and consumed all our drying-stages; a grievous loss, and one amply retaliated no doubt by the English. In view of this and similar acts of violence and misrule, 'I need not,' says Mr. Pitt in 1800, 'urge upon the House that the fishery of Newfoundland has been for two centuries the constant object of rivalship between the French and English.' And 'at this time' (1831), writes the author of 'Newfoundland' in the 'Penny Cyclopaedia,' 'it is far from being placed on a satisfactory footing, though the sovereignty of the island, as settled by the treaty of Utrecht, remains undisputed.' Fortunately for all men, cod, when fished for at a right depth (viz. at from twenty-five to fifty fathoms), are to be found in vast and seemingly exhaustless quantities in many other parts of the watery world, as well as over the summit of that great submarine mountain, which was looked upon for a time as their great and almost exclusive depôt. So long back as in the days of Edward IV., when English fishermen were strictly prohibited the cod-trade in the isles of Sweden and Denmark, and were especially warned off the coasts of Iceland, the exports from these places were so great, as to induce Elizabeth, during the reign of Christian IV. of Denmark, first to beg and then take 'French leave' to send her subjects thither on the ven-

ture. The Dogger Bank has long been famous for cod, and deep-sunk hordes of these fish are now known to lie close upon our own shores, particularly along those of Norfolk and Lincoln. Of late years, too, greater takes have been effected off those of New England alone, than from the great fishery of Newfoundland itself. The G. morrhua is therefore a most widely distributed fish, and being exceedingly prolific, we have every reason to believe that a remote posterity will continue to eat them and oyster sauce together with as little stint as now.* Twenty years ago it was computed that twenty thousand sailors were employed, who carried off 36,000,000 from Newfoundland alone. Even on our own shores this fish is sometimes so common as to become a drug in provincial markets, and instances have occurred of very fine specimens finding no sale. Mr. Yarrell gives a remarkable instance of one weighing seventy pounds, which sold at Scarborough for a shilling. The steady maintenance of enormous supplies from these cod-banks will not surprise any who consider the unprecedented fecundity of the females. In the abdomen of one mother, and she a moderate-sized coddess of only nine pounds' weight, not fewer than nine hundred thousand eggs have been counted; what increase, then, in spite of every conceivable deduction, might we not expect from shoals so largely disseminated, generally distributed, and containing myriads of members of twice these dimensions!

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* This inference is borne out by what we read of their stratification, which is so dense and deep that nothing seems to affect it; in spite of the myriads upon myriads devoured by wild birds and ravenous sea-monsters, and the quantity (a very small one comparatively) abstracted by man, all that is necessary in this fishery is to be incessantly dropping and drawing in the line; and so long as the fisherman's arm is equal to the effort, he may count his fish by the time it requires to pull up and re-adjust his tackle.

Here we may well exclaim with Spenser,—

> Oh! what an endlesse work has he in hand
> Who'd count the sea's abundant progeny,
> Whose fruitful seed far passeth that on land,
> And also theirs that roame in th' azure sky,—
> So fertile be the floods in generation,
> So vast their numbers, and so numberless their nation.

It may not be here out of place to give a few particulars of the fishing craft as pursued at Newfoundland, where 'all we export for all our rich returns, is a little spirits, provisions, fishing-lines, and fishing-hooks;'* so that, as M. Lacépède has well observed, the matter is one worthy to engage the attention of all enlightened persons, whether they be statesmen, philosophers, or philanthropists; therefore he is solicitous for the patriots of his own country to join with him in the vow, 'que la grande nation, lorsqu'elle verra luire le jour fortuné où l'olivier de la paix balancera sa tête sacrée, et les palmes du génie, κ. τ. λ. . . . qu'elle n'oublie pas son zèle éclairé pour les'—cod-fisheries. From this author we learn several interesting particulars respecting the mode of conducting these, whether on land or on ship-board. He begins by informing us that nets were first employed till it was found that these were liable not only to laceration, but to be frequently swept away by marine monsters shut up in the mesh-work; when the fishermen at length adopted the plan, now universally pursued, of 'long-line' fishing: the depths to which these lines are sunk, varies with the time of year, being from five to twenty fathoms during the season of shore fishing, which commences in April; and from thirty to forty fathoms when the crews follow the fish as they recede from the shore, and continue to take them at these great depths till December, after which winter prorogues all further

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* Burke.

proceedings. In spring the trading captains bring their vessels to the bank as early as practicable; the object of this being to secure a good station, which, when most of the shipping is already on the spot, may not be quite so easy to effect. When the vessels have cast anchor, the waters around are speedily enlivened with a flotilla of boats sent out by their respective crews to procure bait; the baits used vary considerably, but owing to the great voracity* of the fish, all succeed; cod, like sharks, swallowing not only every kind of fish and shell-fish, whole or in fragments, fresh or salted, but bolting even bits of wood or red cloth, and sometimes, as appears from the subjoined anecdote, a whole book.†

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* This voracity is in a great measure accounted for by a very rapid assimilation, which can convert haddocks and other prey into cod in a few hours:[1] the potency of the gastric juice being such as to turn the shells of lobsters and crabs *red*, as if they had been recently boiled.

† A fish, furnishing the University of Cambridge with a religious feast, was the occasion of a tract entitled, 'Vox Piscis, or the Book Fish,' containing three treatises, which were found in the belly of a cod in Cambridge market at midsummer eve, 1626. This fish is said to have been taken in Lynn Deeps, and was carried to the Vice-Chancellor by the beadle on the discovery of a book within it: as it made its appearance at the commencement, the very time when good learning and good cheer were most expected, it was quaintly remarked, 'that this sea guest had brought his *book* and his carcase to furnish both' (Moule). It is to be hoped that the learning he brought in his belly was not so out of season as he himself must have been at midsummer. The parallel story of a shark who, having swallowed the log-book of a vessel that had been scuttled after the massacre of the crew, and afterwards repenting, took the first hook that offered, and turned

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[1] If a haddock be left on a small line for a tide over a cod-bank, it generally disappears, and a cod is found occupying its place on the barbs; six hours are said to suffice for the conversion of any other fish into 'gadus morrhua.'

In spite of the almost incessant bickerings of rival crews, certain bye-laws, framed for the good of each ship, are rigidly adhered to by all. Amongst these, it is enacted that the man who catches fewest fish (a point easily settled by counting the tongues)* shall clean the deck and throw the heads overboard; to avoid which often cold, and, after a day's hard labour, always fatiguing job, the tars are all eager to anticipate each other, and to apply themselves as early as may be to the morning's work. As soon as a fish has been hooked and hauled up, (sometimes in his greediness he is caught by two fishermen at once, when he becomes the property of the one who hooks him nearest the eye,) the captor removes the tongue, and hands him to a second executioner, the 'décolleur,' who, cutting off the head, passes him over to another functionary, who cuts the body open, and ripping out the liver and intestines, puts him into the hands of the 'tranchcur,' to remove, by means of an exceedingly sharp knife, the ribs and upper vertebræ, and then, either to split him open from the head to the caudal fin, and dress him *à plat;* or else from the gills to the anal fin, *à la rond;*† other hands having next carefully sponged and dried him, he is handed over to the *salter*, who rubs the body with one-sixth of

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king's evidence, so as to hang the villain from the revelations made by the document in his inside, is no doubt familiar to many of our readers.

* These are separated as soon as the fish is hauled up, and kept with the sounds for salting, as a great delicacy: this practice is, it appears, very ancient.

† 'The fish of Egypt, as shown in the paintings on the walls of the Theban palaces (*vide* Caillard's 'Egypt'), were divided lengthwise by a knife, not unlike that now used for splitting the cod-fish of Newfoundland; their fish were cured with fossil salt, procured from the African Desert, sea-salt being deemed by the priests impure.'—*Moule.*

its weight of salt, and then gives it over to the last man, who arranges all the carcases in rows, and finally barrels them. That part of the proceedings of the 'Petit Andrés' and 'Trois Echelles' who first operate upon him, is given by Lacépède with the precision of an historian describing the execution of some state prisoner: 'L'étêteur saisit d'abord la morue, en place à faux la tête sur le bord de la table, la serre avec un couteau à deux tranchans, nommé couteau à étêter; quand la morue est décollée, l'étêteur enlève toutes les entrailles, et ayant fini son opération il pousse le corps à l'habilleur,* qui le saisit de la main gauche et qui tient de la main droite le couteau à habiller,† dont les fonctions consistent à l'ouvrir depuis la gorge jusqu'à l'anus.' All the fish, however, are not salted; stock-fish‡ are merely sun-dried, and a good many used to be towed away alive in perforated boxes, care being taken first to prick the swim-

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* The terms severally employed to express the operation of cutting open different fish are strangely various: thus the reader will remember, when he puts the slice into a fish, that he gobbets trout, truncheons eel, fins chub, tusks barbel, splates pike, solays bream, and sides haddocks.

† 'The sun during the summer months is very scorching in Newfoundland: the nights and mornings being temperate and pleasant, so that the operation of drying is generally a very easy one.'

‡ This name, which is also given to ling and haddock similarly preserved, is either so called because the carcase is spread-eagled across transverse sticks in the drying, or because it is as hard as a stick, and requires a bastinado before it can be dressed. Immense quantities of this fish are exported from the north. 'Gules, a stock-fish argent, crowned, or, are the appropriate arms of Iceland; these arms are borne by the Kings of Denmark in the royal achievement, illustrating in the simplest manner the source of a chief part of their revenue. The Bawdes' of Bedfordshire quarterings exhibit three headless fish, presumed, perhaps not unwarrantably, to be stock-fish.'—*Moule.*

bladder, which kept the fish from rising, and so injuring their bodies against the top of the case.*

The whole of the cod's carcase, like that of the sturgeon, is prime meat; the gills alone are not cooked, but carefully collected for future bait; the tongue is considered on all hands a prime delicacy; the skin and swim-bladder (or sounds), beside their place on the epicure's plate, yield an isinglass extensively used by brewers, and not inferior to that of the sturgeon itself; the eggs and intestines, under the names of 'noues et rogues,' enjoy, in France, a reputation at least equal to these last; the bones, from which oil is extracted, feed the Kamtchatka dog, and, mixed with marine plants,† the Icelander's cattle;‡ lastly, the liver of the fish is not only the finest of hepatic luxuries, but yields half its volume in an oil on which we must pause to make a few remarks.

Though at first only generally known as a better sort of lamp oil, and to curriers in particular, as communicating more suppleness to leather than that of the whale, it was even then valuable; its commercial importance however has of late years greatly increased, owing to its large employment in medicine.§

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* This practice, in consequence of the far greater supplies of cod obtained now than formerly, has no doubt been given up, as it would, at the present low price paid for this species, scarcely be remunerative.

† 'Properly dried, they constitute the fuel of the desolate steppes of the icy sea.'

‡ This is a very ancient practice, in vogue amongst the ichthyophagi in the days of Arrian and Alexander, and of course long before.

§ The mode originally had recourse to for procuring this oil, was to punch a hole in a tub, line it well with spruce boughs, and then place the livers upon the top to corrupt in the sun; when putrefaction had commenced, the oil began to run apace from the putrilaginous mass, and in less than a week the whole had

Of the vast variety of drugs used or misused by the medical practitioner, the majority certainly produce no definite impression on his senses. The routine rhubarb pill, the familiar black dose, the mild cretaceous mixture; in a word, all the petty tyranny of those drugs which are employed against the fancied or quite the minor ills of the body, make no appeals to his sensibility; but some medicines cannot be viewed or prescribed with the same stoical indifference. Paphian blue pill suggests a new view of 'love among the roses,'* which, in spite of all that Fracastorius'† Muse has done to embellish the foul disease for which it is given, he looks upon with submausea and dislike; pruriginous brimstone, too, albeit lotum, and ever so well 'washed,' no medical man will fancy clean enough to finger, or desire to put its 'flowers' to his nose; while, as to every species of ointment since the days for smearing the person with fats and oils is past, he, remembering only the vile purposes to which inunction is now restricted, regards them, and the gallipots which contain them, with unsuppressed disgust; but of all painful drugs to scent, that daily applied to the moribund nostrils of thousands, overpowering death-bed ether, which, escaping from the narrowest chink of the closest-corked phial, comes fitfully, coldly, clammily, and as a breath from the charnel-house, to force back upon his memory many a scene of sorrow where he has inhaled it, in presence of the last struggles of the departing, and amid the sobs, and wailings, and faintings of the bereaved—he recoils from with detestation and loathing. Other medicines, again, convey pleasanter sensuous impressions, and suggest more agreeable

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dripped through the boughs into a vessel placed underneath to receive it.

* Blue pill is made by triturating mercury in conserve of roses, till the two are intimately mixed.

† See his poem, 'De Morbo Gallico.'

recollections; colchicum, that as by a charm assuages the anguish of acute rheumatism; and thou, lighter than bark, 'levior cortice,' invaluable quinine, that paralysest the violence of ague, and loosest his victim from the punctual foe's attack: the sealed mottled wrapper, with its two blue papers enclosed, and a doctor, worthy a saint's name, on the cover; the powder that *dorers* the unhappy off to sleep, and 'closes lids though sullied with a tear;' hemlock, that mitigates the spasmodic sufferings of hooping-cough; and belladonna, the antidote to that maligncst of scourges which ofttimes, not content with taking our first-born, departs not till it has swept our nursery with the besom of destruction, and stilled for ever the sweet jargoning of infant voices lately heard exulting in the now hushed chamber with its drawn blind,—all these are associated with more genial feelings; nor do those vile drugs, hight fœtids, which have so often compromised him with pouting fair ones (who coquettishly vowed to give them and him up together, though they happily afterwards thought better of it, and now have been long since married and mamma'd), nor yet that benumbing chloroform which, annihilating pain, robs the surgeon's saw, probe, and bistoury of half their terrors, present themselves to view unappreciated or unfelt. But with what far greater complacency and wonder must every enlightened physician contemplate nowadays that wholly unexpected and invaluable ally which suffering lungs have recently secured from the iatric liver of the cod.* *Alere flammam*—to feed common

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* What calendared saint, whose illumined name shines in Roman missal or breviary, can show half so many or so well attested cases of miraculous cure as have emanated from the body of this fish? Verily, as shoemakers and cabmen have their patron saints (Crispin and Fiacre), the doctors ought to insist, when the next vacancy occurs at the Vatican, on the canonization of *St. Gadus*.

lamps—was, till lately, all it professed to do; but now its vaunt is, *alere vitam*—to replenish the lamp of life when burning low and threatening to go out. About sixty years have elapsed since Dr. Bardsley first sounded its praises, but scarce a dozen have passed since it was fairly put upon trial in this country, and everybody now knows the result. Thousands of cases hitherto most unpromising, have, under its auspices, suddenly changed their aspect, and looked bright: here, a fair girl hastening to decay, had scarcely taken a few doses, when the ominous cough was appeased, she recovered her roses, smiled once more on a reassured family of friends, and went on her way rejoicing; there a case of yet graver import, which had whispered death to the listening ear, made a stand, rallied, and consumption was, for the time, arrested in mid course; and again, in patients still further reduced by the blighting malady, the administration of the bland oil has frequently been observed to respite, soften, and assuage, sufferings beyond its power to remove. Scepticism has, by slow degrees, at length made way to conviction; and he who, a few years ago, pretending to cure consumption, would justly have passed for a quack, is now countenanced everywhere by brother practitioners, who have all the same story to tell, till the world at large has become convinced of the fact; and there is now not a village apothecary through the length and breadth of our isle who has not himself witnessed some of the 'wonders' which this penetrating balm, under the Divine blessing, has already done and is daily doing for the children of men.

The Church of Rome is quite as much beholden to cod as the doctors themselves; on it her credulous sons faithfully fast more than upon almost any other species. This very important duty of ichthyophagizing dates some way back in ecclesiastical history. 'It was taught,' says Mr. Moule, 'before the age of printing, by means of rude

sculptures and pictures; and these necessary helps to public devotion are also to be found on the enrichments of architecture.' A grotesque figure, with outstretched arms, holding up the fish, and the wassail bowl, is shown in one of the capitals in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral. So early as the middle of the fourteenth century opsophagy was enjoined, in order that men should slay their bodies with the cold fleme of fish-eating;* and in support of it, as the amusing author just cited further instructs us, one Juan Ruez wrote a poem, 'which is not without humour and sprightliness, in which the *beasts* and the *fish* are arrayed in mortal combat, and which ends in the total discomfiture of the former, the fish and the holy cause obtaining the victory, and Mrs. Lent condemning Mr. Carnal for his contumacy, to fast (unless in case of illness) upon one spare meal of fish a day.' Perhaps, however, in their origin, these compulsory fish-meals were not so much based on religious motives as on those suggested by political expediency; it was even thought by some, that the practice should be enforced, as in accordance with a law of nature. As old Tusser sings,

> The land doth will, the sea doth wish,
> Spare sometimes flesh, and feed on fish;

and in compliance with some such notion, we find, *after* the Reformation, the law enjoining it still in force. The sumptuary requirements of Edward VI. and Elizabeth were just as stringent in this matter as the Papal. The statute 2 Edward III., c. 6, p. 19, professes to have these three objects in view: 1st, the better observance of Fridays and Saturdays, and other times of accustomed abstinence; 2nd, that fishermen may thereby the rather be set to work; and 3rd, that by eating fish, much flesh may be saved and increased. Burnet, in his 'History

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* Tyndal.

of the Reformation,' gives as many good reasons for obedience to the same—viz. that fish-eating affords due sustenance, as a means to virtue, and to subdue men's bodies to their soul and spirit; that it encourages the fishing trade, and that it saves flesh. The despisers of the above act were liable to imprisonment, and no flesh was allowed during incarceration, except to such as might be duly authorized to receive it,—viz. 'the sick, the aged, the infirm, and finally, women being great with child, who were allowed to participate in such one kind of flesh as they shall have a great *lust unto*.' To the two primary fish days (Friday and Saturday) Queen Elizabeth added a third (Wednesday), to be observed in the same manner, allowing however one dish of flesh, provided there were at the same meal consumed three dishes of sea-fish; though during certain seasons this permission did not extend to either *beef* or *veal*.* How long these restrictions were enforced we do not know; but when once the religious motive was eliminated, they would probably soon come to be disregarded and obsolete.

The following ingenious charade, with which we close our notice upon *cod*, may not be familiar to all our readers:—

Cut off my head, and singular I act;
Cut off my tail, and plural I appear;
Cut off my tail and head—oh! wondrous fact,
Although my middle's left, there's nothing here.

What is my head cut off?—a sounding sea.
What is my tail cut off?—a flowing river.
Far in the ocean depths, I fearless play;
Giver of sweetest sounds, yet mute for ever.

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* Transgressors of this part of the Code Elizabeth were muleted £3 for each offence, except it were done by license, for which each paid according to his station—viz. peers paid £1. 6*s*. 8*d*., knights and wives, 13*s*. 4*d*., and the common folk, 6*s*. 8*d*.

Gadus Merlucius (Hake).

A somewhat lengthy notice of the cod will preclude our saying anything of many other gadeans, almost as beneficial to mankind as the cod itself. Of the haddock, which an English admiral,* in his quarterings, 'clutches in strong right-hand,' while a German Baron† 'embays' it over the episcopal hat of an ecclesiastical ancestor; of whiting, which, in the opinion of a French connoisseur, is so light 'qu'il ne poise non plus dans l'estomac que pendu à la ceinture,'‡ and which ornamented the table at the coronation fish banquet of Catherine, queen of Henry the Fifth; of ling, which the third Edward thought so valuable as, Numa-like, to tax the sale of it; of the burbot, or coney fish, between two of which, 'argent on a chevron azure, a coney courant,' is conspicuous in the arms of a Gloucester prelate,§ and to procure constant supplies of which a French countess is said to have sunk half her fortune;—of all these and other notabilities of the present family we cannot here speak, but must reserve our remaining 'few words' for the gadus merlucius, or hake, the pseudo-descendant, as will shortly appear, of the ancient ass-fish, asellus. This some of our older naturalists for awhile gave out to be the haddock, because of his Norman name of donkey, plus an asinine stripe across the shoulders,‖ plus a barbel below his nether jaw; till it was discovered that the haddock was not a Mediterranean fish; and the hake, a near neighbour, whose general hue of body was sufficiently asinine to sustain a simile, and who moreover frequented that sea, was made to supplant him.

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* Sir Nicholas Haddock.
† Baron von Eytzing.
‡ Rondolet.
§ Cheney.
‖ Thus Lister, interpreting a passage of Varro, says: 'Ex virgatis maculis nigris ad scapulas et secundum ventrem asinorum instar nomen habet.'—*List. in Apic.*

The grounds upon which the modern merlucius or sea pike, and the ancient marine donkey, were assumed to be identical, will scarcely bear the test of inquiry, as indeed Hardouin confesses, declaring that though he translates Pliny's word 'asellus' by merlucius, or hake, he does so rather out of respect to the opinion of the learned than because he considers the fact to be certain and established. In order to put the reader in a capacity to judge on what slight grounds this opinion has been hazarded, we will now give him all the details furnished by classic authors respecting this fish. Varro says that asellus is named from the ass-like hue of his skin; Aristotle, that he is a ground fish, who buries himself temporarily in the sand,* where, by means of certain little oral appendages, he inveigles prey after the manner of the fishing frog;† (this indolent mode of sustentation has procured for the Greek ass-fish the reproachful term of sluggard, *ὄνων νωθρὸν γένος*, as we read in Oppian.) Ælian adds to all this, that he is of a solitary turn,‡ hating society, and in short, if we may invent the word, quite a 'misichthys,' that his heart is in his stomach§ and that he carries stones in his head.‖ Putting these several hints together, they furnish, we think, abundant evidence that

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* The *ὄνος*, says Aristotle, is one of those fish which hide for a season, for which reason he is not always to be taken. Pliny and Ælian repeat the same statement. Pliny says this retreat takes place during the great heats of summer; Ælian, at the rising of the dog-star, and that it lasts for sixty days. *The hake however is taken all the year round.*

† The *onos* hides in sand, while it employs, like the fishing frog, certain oral appendages, which the sailors call the *ῥαβδία* (angler's tackle), and by means of these they entice little fish, decoyed by these movements, which they mistake for the undulations of fucus.

‡ Μονότροπός ἐστι, καὶ σὺν ἄλλοις βιοῦν οὐκ ἀνέχεται.

§ Ἔχει δὲ ἄρα ἰχθύων μόνος οὗτος ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ τὴν καρδίαν.

‖ Ἔχει δὲ ἐν ἐγκεφάλῳ λίθους, οἱπεροῦν ἐοίκασι μύλαις τὸ σχῆμα.

the ass-fish cannot be the hake; for, in the first place, the hake has no barbels;* secondly, he employs force, not stratagem, for his livelihood; thirdly, he is by no means a sluggard in disposition; neither, fourthly, does he hide himself from observation in the sand; fifthly, he does not carry large stones in his head; nor, lastly, is his heart (unless metaphorically, and after the manner of gluttons generally) centred in his stomach, but in its usual place. All these difficulties led a distinguished French naturalist of the old school to abandon the merlucius in favour of a more promising fish belonging to another subdivision of the present genus. To Belon is the glory due of having found, on the Cretan coast, a gadean which, in many important particulars, certainly accords with the ass-fish of the ancients, and notably so with Aristotle's first requisite—these oral appendages we call barbels, of which it has in fact three, two attached to the under and one to the upper lip: another circumstance apparently much in favour of Belon's view is, that the Cretans call this fish gadeisparo, or ass-fish.

Having thus half-persuaded one's reader and self that this must be the old, lost donkey at last, it may seem almost captious to ask why, were this frequenter of the Cretan coast indeed that asellus redivivus, does he only hug the shores of Crete, and absent himself from his

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* The presence or absence of these appurtenances, and differences of the back fins, have caused the genus gadus to be divided into several subgenera, as follows:—

1. Cod, haddock, dorse, which have three dorsal and two anal fins, and *one* barbel at the lower jaw.
2. Whiting, coal-fish, pollack, possessed of three dorsal and two anal fins, and *no* barbels.
3. Hake, which shows two dorsal and one anal fin, and *no* barbels; and,
4. Ling, with the fins as in the last, with *one* or *more* barbels, according to the species.

former well-known sites; why, *ex. gr.* is he not now seen in the Nice or Neapolitan markets, where formerly his ancestors abounded? We therefore rather incline to think, as far as outward appearances go, though Belon's individual might be the asellus, yet that a common Mediterranean fish, the phycis mediterranea, or sea-tench, which is a cod, and has a barbel and a large head, which might make the epicures of antiquity take a great fancy to it, is, more probably than any other species, the ancient *ὄνος* of Aristotle and asellus of Pliny, the only common gadean with barbels frequenting southern seas. The old donkey-fish, then, not being the hake, we shall restrict ourselves to but few words respecting it. In regard to culinary merits it stands high. That the marine ass was nearly as good as the 'river wolf,' 'asello post lupum præcipuam fuisse auctoritatem,' was, Pliny assures us, the joint opinion of Laberius the poet, and of C. Nepos the historian; agreeably to which Galen also places such prime fish as labrax, soles, mullets, and mugils, after this in goodness, expressly affirming in his treatise on dietetics that a good asellus may compete with the very best saxatile fish.* 'Post asellum diaria non amo,' says the dainty Petronius; 'At tam deformi non dignus nomine asellus,' says Ovid; and Apicius sufficiently shows his high appreciation of its merits by giving several elaborate recipes for dressing it. Its reputation indeed (like that of the hake and haddock) stood generally high; but as no fish nor any earthly creature ever yet gave universal satisfaction, Turner has not scrupled to affirm of the haddock that 'the flesh is unwholesome and prone to excite fever,' and Archestratus to record of the *ὄνος*, in the same querulous strain, that though others consider it a pleasant food light of digestion, he himself by no

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* 'Aselli, si probo utuntur alimento et in mari puro degunt, carnis bonitate cum saxatilibus contendunt.'

means concurs in this opinion.* The testimony of English authors against the wholesomeness of the haddock is not accredited, and the statement of a single Greek gourmet, opposed as it is to those of most of his countrymen, is probably as little worthy of credit. Idiosyncrasies in taste go for nothing here: some persons of vitiated palates bribe their tongues occasionally to disparage turtle, and to profess mutton preferable to venison; here at least, if not elsewhere, public opinion may be safely taken in preference to private judgment.†

The hake (unlike Aristotle's *ὄφος*, which is a solitaire) goes about in great bodies, and is eminently gregarious; he is a very greedy fish, and as fond of pouching pilchards as the cod is of lining his inside with *him*: one merlucius will get through a dozen of these clupeans in a very short time; nor, like other fish with sharp teeth, is he scrupulous against whom he whets them, and we must report, to the discredit of the Neapolitan hakes, that of the quantities we used to inspect in the daily fish-market, by far the majority exhibited the tail or half the body of some young codling (generally a brother hake) projecting from the mouth, the head and shoulders of which they had already digested. The Mediterranean abounds in hake, and it is equally common in the north. No country is better off for merlucian supplies than our own; forty thousand in one day have been landed on the shores of Mount Bay in Cornwall: the quantity taken off various parts of the Irish coast is also immense: indeed they may be said almost to encircle the Emerald

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* *Σομφὴν δὲ τρέφει τινὰ σάρκα, Κἄλλως οὐχ ἡδεῖαν ἐμοί.*

† Besides the more usual culinary methods had recourse to in preparing the haddock for the table, the Poles, Germans, and Belgians are in the habit of seasoning it with turmeric, which is said to communicate both a flavour and an agreeable colour to the flesh. The pleasantest way of dressing haddock is, we think, in curry.

Isle; the men of Wexford make a good thing of the banks which lie off their county; Galway Bay is called also 'the Bay of Hakes;' and Waterford, scarcely behind Wexford, has been known to yield one thousand line fish to six men in a night.

Hake is frequently borne in heraldry, in allusion to the name: 'Sable semé of cross crosslets fitchy, three hakes hauriant argent,' are the arms of the family of Hacket of Newtown, Isle of Wight. The Hakeheds of Ireland adopt the same fish; the Hacket and Doxay families in Ireland, and the Devonshire Hakes, quarter their namesakes hauriant, on arms azure, vert, and or. We pass now from the cod, to the

Pleuronects, or Flat Fish.

Brill and soles are nutritious and agreeable, and the same may be said of turbot.*

Fish with flat bodies are of two kinds, one (like skate) flattened downwards or vertically, the other (which includes turbots, plaice, soles, and flounders) compressed from side to side, except the head, which is distorted as well as flattened. All the species belonging to this division are styled pleuronects, or side-swimmers, as they ordinarily move through the water on one of their flat sides.† The tribe consists of many individuals, unequally distributed in different parts of the globe, and in greater

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* Ψῆττα, βούγλωσσος, εὔτροφοι καὶ ἡδεῖαι, τούτοις δὲ ἀναλογεῖ ὁ ῥόμβος.—*Athen.*

† The coloured surface of a sole is not the back, nor the white one underneath the belly; but the upper and under *sides*. The absence of colour on the last is an effect of etiolation, or deprivation of the sun's rays; the fish indeed when scared exposes this surface to the light, but too momentarily to be affected by it. The upper side assimilates so perfectly with its *gîte* on the sand, that the eye frequently requires the end of the barbed fish-spear to determine on which of the two it is resting.

or less variety, according to the latitude. 'Flat-fish,' says Mr. Yarrell, 'are found to diminish as the degrees of northern latitude increase: in England, there are sixteen species; at the parallel of Jutland, Denmark, and the islands at the mouth of the Baltic, thirteen; on the coast of Norway the number is ten; at Iceland it is reduced to five, whilst Greenland possesses only three species.'* With many of its members (though possibly with not quite so many as ourselves) the ancient world was familiar, and on a select few of these we shall now offer some remarks. We ought here, if heraldic rights or precedence at table were alone consulted, to direct attention first to the turbot; but as modern ichthyology has displaced great turbot (rhombus maximus) for vulgar plaice (platessa vulgaris), we must consent, as we are writing neither a cookery-book nor the heraldry of fish, to follow Cuvier rather than Soyer or Moule, and give an undeserved priority to dabs and flounders, reserving turbot and soles for a second course. Of the common plaice-fish (platessa vulgaris), though unlike most members of the finny tribe his body presents a lozenge ready chequered for quartering, the annals of English heraldry make no mention; and that indefatigable antiquarian Mr. Moule is obliged to refer his readers to a Danish family hight Bukens, who have adopted three platessæ naiant on an argent bend, in an azure field, in their armorial bearings. Having given this fish brevet rank, we have but little to say about him: not being a Mediterranean species, he was unknown to the ancients; his bright orange spots have procured him some partisans, particularly on the Sussex coast, where these brilliant parallelograms have obtained

* We do not know the number of exotic pleuronects in *warmer* waters than our own—what proportion, for instance, English species bear to those of Indian Seas. In the Mediterranean markets, the variety does not appear *primâ facie* so considerable as our own.

him the name of 'diamond plaice.' Large specimens reach occasionally ten to twelve pounds' weight; they are generally however held and sold very cheap, a dozen, weighing thirty pounds, sometimes fetching but a few pence. The French, who occasionally salt, call them, we presume from the little coloured squares on their upper surface, *carrelet*.

Flounder, or Fluke.

Though the flounder be mentioned complacently by Pope in conjunction with the gudgeon, as what 'his Thames affords,' and though Thames flesi seem to enjoy a sort of cockney reputation of their own, yet a poorer fish, except plaice (for what is more flat than a flounder?), it would not be easy to name. The Frieslanders however think otherwise, and have been at the trouble of naturalizing them in fish-ponds. The flounders, too, about Memel on the Baltic, are held in esteem by the inhabitants of the locality; yet is Catalani's *mot* of an inferior cantatrice, that she might be the best of her kind, but that her kind was none of the best, no doubt applicable to every variety of this poor pisciculus, whom it is far better entertainment to fish for than to eat. The best time for taking him is at dawn, when he is on the prowl for a breakfast:

> He that intends a flounder to surprise,
> Must start betimes and fish before sunrise.

Flesi have qualities invaluable in the angler's eye, being greedy, playful, and full of pluck. 'These fish,' writes Franks in his 'Northern Memoirs,' 'are bold as buccaniers, of much more confidence than caution, and so fond of a worm that they will go to the banquet, though they die at the board: they are endowed with great resolution, and struggle stoutly for the victory when hooked; they are also more than ordinarily difficult to

deal with by reason of their build, which is altogether flat, as it were a level. The flounder, I must further tell you, delights to dwell among stones; besides, he is a great admirer of deeps and ruinous decays, yet as fond as any fish of moderate streams; and none beyond him, except the perch, that is more solicitous to rifle into ruins, insomuch that a man would fancy him an antiquary, considering he is so affected with reliques.' In heraldry, sable a fluke argent is the armorial bearings of a family of the name of Fisher; and the crest of the Butts of Dorking is an arm couped at the elbow and erect, grasping a butt-fish or flounder. These fish, like some pleuronects, are often reversed—*i. e.* have eyes (other flounders being the standard) on the wrong side of the head; specimens also occur presenting other anomalies, showing sometimes both sides coloured alike, others both equally colourless. Northern seas furnish another fish belonging to the present subgenus, the platessa limanda, or dab, which has larger eyes than the common flounder, and a rough skin, whence it derives its name, from lima, a file. Dabs, being a cheap and a much better flavoured fish than the flounder, have a great sale in the London and Paris markets, where there are no less than five different species occasionally exposed for sale; the commonest of all is the P. limanda, and next P. microcephala, 'town or lemon dab,' as it is commonly called at the fish-stalls.

Intermediate between the platessa and rhombus occurs the hippoglossus vulgaris, or holibut, also a northern fish and more remarkable for size than quality; its dimensions are indeed whale-like; individuals have been captured nearly eight feet in length, four in breadth, and a span thick; and fresh-cut specimens of half the bulk are sometimes exposed at inferior London fish-stalls. The holibut is held in no esteem by connoisseurs at home; some, in a disparaging mood, call it 'workhouse turbot;'

but though thus stigmatized in England, the Greenlanders, according to Crantz, often subsist for a considerable period almost exclusively on its flesh, which is cut into slips, and dried in the sun: the Norwegians and Icelanders also largely salt and barrel it for home consumption. As few fish when hooked offer a more determined resistance, plunge more furiously, or struggle longer for life than a full-sized holibut, the fishermen employ very strong tackle, and even then are often not a little put to it to haul him safe on board.

Having thus summarily disposed of the coarser plaice, flounders, dabs, and holibut, with all of which the ancients were happily unacquainted, we come to three much more delicate flats, those princely pleuronects—turbots, brills, and soles.

The first (rhombus* maximus) was so well known to the ancients, that to cite all the passages where the mention of it occurs would be tedious, and might give our readers a fish surfeit, which we should be sorry to have on our conscience. It was held by the two rival representatives and exponents of taste in civilized man in as high favour as it now is with us: 'nothing to a turbot' was a Greek sentiment as well as a Roman proverb, and

> Th' untasted turbot shows his tempting flank,

was no doubt either† a poetic license intended by Horace to be received as a pleasantry. The common Greek names for it were *ψῆττα* and *ῥόμβος*, as we read in

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* This genus includes, besides the R. maximus or turbot proper, the brill (R. lævis), the kitt (R. punctatus, Bloch), the whiff (R. cardina, Cuv.), and two very small Mediterranean species, R. nudus, which is only two inches long, and R. candidissimus, a still smaller species, and quite transparent.

† Ingustata mihi porrexerat ilia rhombi.—*Hor.*

Athenæus: 'the Romans call our ψῆττα rhombus, which is also a Greek name.'* Archestratus uses the first word,

They served up mighty psettas then, and soles all subrugose ;†

and another Greek deipnosophist the last,

Sicilian rhombus of the milky flakes.‡

Frequent allusions to the size of the turbot occur in Latin writers, thus,—

Great turbots and late suppers lead
To debt, disgrace, and abject need.§
The border of the broadest dish
Lay hid beneath the monster fish.‖

Rondolet tells of one he had seen measuring five cubits from head to tail, four across the broadest part of the body, and the flesh of which was one foot deep! And that extraordinary 'Adriaci spatium admirabile rhombi' which Domitian had so much difficulty, by reason of its size, to cook, is a fit pendant to it. But of all big fish, none approaches that which furnished the giant Geryon with a dinner, and Swift no doubt with his conception of Gulliver. For him the inhabitants caught only the finest fish, *οὐχ ἡμερίους*,—not such as you meet

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* Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ καλοῦσι τὴν ψῆτταν ῥόμβον, καὶ ἔστι τὸ ὄνομα Ἑλληνικόν.

† Εἶτα λαβεῖν ψῆτταν μεγάλην, καὶ τὴν ὑπότρηχυν βούγλωσσον.

‡ Γαλακτοχρῶτα Σικελὸς
ὃν πήγνυσ' ὄχλος ῥόμβῳ.

But sometimes under each of these names distinct species were intended, as in our motto prefixed to the present family, *q. v.*

§ *Grandes* rhombi patinæque
Grande ferunt una cum damno dedecus.—*Hor.*

‖ Quamvis lata, gerat patella rhombum,
Rhombus latior est tamen patellas.—*Mart.*

with daily in the market, but such as offered an acreage of body equal to that of the isle of Crete. One of these they would place upon a lordly dish capable of holding a hundred as large. When it was the king's pleasure to have the fish prepared for table, the Sardians and Lycians and Mygdonians, the Cranæans and the Paphians, began to vie with each other in felling timber to cook it. Then they piled up the forests they had cut down into a vast pyre in circuit equal to a city, and having let a lake into the caldron that was to seethe it, and carried for eight months in succession a hundred daily waggon-loads of salt to season the pot, they kindled the crackling mass, and as it flamed up, five galleys, every one of which carried its five banks of rowers complete, cruised round the margin of the caldron sea, and as it bubbled up, issued prompt directions to the crowd below, not to overboil the contents.

Was not that a noble fish to set before a king?

It is to be regretted that the name of the species is not given by the historian: we can only conjecture, therefore, from the size, and the trouble taken to prepare it properly, that the individual in question was a rhombus maximus of very large size! But whilst we admit that this is only hypothesis, we are not so willing to give up Domitian's rhombus, which all the world in our school-boy days agreed to call turbot; and to debase Juvenal's 'bellua peregrina' into a vulgar brill.* There is no good reason that we can see for reversing the opinion originally entertained respecting *this* particular fish in favour of the brill; and there are some objections against

* No error is innocent, and the indirect consequence of this has been to make the fishmongers of Billingsgate and Hungerford require the poor invalid to pay as much for a brill as the wealthy epicure for his turbot.

it. In the first place, in Juvenal's notice of *his* rhombus occur the words 'erectas in terga sudes;' now sudes (we write for unlearned ears) is literally a stake, or rigid stick, and is so used in the Georgics of Virgil; applied therefore to a fish, it must be to one who-e fin-rays are rigid and bristling when erect, somewhat after the manner of stakes. Now such a poetic license may be ceded to the back-fin of the turbot, the rays of which are stiff, but it does not accord in any way with the brill, one of whose distinctive characteristics (as separating it from the turbot) is to carry a *soft* back-fin, the rays of which split and divide into delicate threads at the top, as any one may convince himself on next passing a fishmonger's, where both species may be seen often confounded by young housekeepers, lying on the same slab, and inviting comparison. But besides this objection, as the ancients certainly had turbot as well as brill, and as the turbot of Ancona are still famed throughout Italy, why suppose Domitian's '*Adriaco* mirandus litore rhombus' was anything else? So much then as regards this particular rhombus, for we do not mean to maintain that under the same designation both *brill* and *turbot* might not be included; how else, indeed, can we reconcile Galen and Xenocrates, the former of whom recommends plain boiled rhombus to invalids, as the flesh, he says, is *soft;* while the other declares the rhombus to be *too firm* a fish to consume fresh, and advises keeping for some days to make it tender? Here, while the Greek physician clearly means *brill*, which is of much softer fibre, the deipnosophist philosopher must be understood to speak (*eodem sub nomine*) of turbot, which all the world knows is tough enough fresh, and improves very much by keeping. In *other* cases we are inclined to believe that the brill had its distinctive appellation, like the turbot, and that the *passer* associated by Horace with rhombus, which is certainly a pleuronect, may have been it.

Heraldry is as careful as ichthyology to separate brill and turbot: azure three bretts (or brills) naiant, are the arms of the family Bretcock; and the crest of the family Britwesill is also a brill naiant, azure. Three *turbots* argent, finned or, belong to an ancient family, the Turbutts of Yorkshire.*

As the best turbot were formerly 'peregrine' importations into ancient Rome (though the Mediterranean doubtless furnished a good many), so the chief supply brought to our markets at present come from abroad. The Dutch, those indefatigable fishers for the benefit of the world at large, and of themselves in particular, furnish for London consumption alone, eighty thousand rhombi; and to eat these as Nature always intended them to be eaten (though Apicius and Lucullus never found out the secret!) one million of Norway lobsters, for which we pay from twenty-two to twenty-five thousands sterling a year, accompany them up the river.

Ælian mentions a curious mode adopted in some places in his time for taking flat-fish, founded on their well-known peculiarity of keeping close in the sand, like hares in their forms: the plan is extremely simple; a number of fishermen at low water walk over the sand in *sabots*; as the water comes in, various small pleuronects resort to the footprints, and are easily seen and taken. The modern plan is very different, and adapted for taking turbot of much larger dimensions: the fishermen on our northern coasts go out in parties of three to a cobble, each man carrying his long line, the united ends of which are a league in length, and draw after them fifteen hundred

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* Besides the Yorkshire (now Derbyshire) family of Turbutt, a Middlesex and a Scotch family, Tarbet, derive their name and insignia from this fish. A demi turbot crest, tail upwards, gules, is also the family crest of Lawrence, and was so borne by the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, President of the Royal Academy.

and twenty baited hooks; these lines, as they are to lie across the current, can only be shot twice in twenty-four hours, when the rush of the waters slackens, as the tide is about to change. In place of the small cobble used on our coast (which is but twenty feet long by five feet broad), the Dutch repair to the Dogger Bank in a boat twice the length, and three times as broad, carrying besides six fishermen engaged in the craft, a cook as well, who no doubt has plentiful experience in dressing turbot. Here, as the fishing is continuous, and the bank never fails to furnish supplies, the expedition is generally successful, and the proceeds highly lucrative.

Soles. (*Βούγλωσσοι.*)

Soles are distinguished from plaice by having no tubercles on the skin; from holibuts by the smallness of their teeth, which are confined to one jaw; from turbot, by their eyes lying on the right in place of the left of the mouth (which is also twisted to one side), and by the comparative shortness of the dorsal fin. They have a very wide range, extending southward from the Scandinavian and Baltic seas, along the Spanish and Portuguese coasts into the Mediterranean; they are a frequent fish in America; an excellent kind abounds at the Cape of Good Hope; and, not to mention other foreign sites, constitute, as all the world knows, one of the commonest as well as best productions of the British seas, swarming along most of our sandy shores. Though sea-fish by birth and by rights, they will not only live, but thrive in fresh water, and like it so well, as sometimes of their own accord to ascend rivers to a considerable height, and nestle for months in slime at the bottom, where they grow apace; indeed, when some have been retained in fresh, and others of a light weight placed in salt water, the first, after a year's sojourn, have been known to ac-

quire an increment of weight twice that of their saline cousins. With regard to the origin of soles, the strange position has been advanced that they spring from prawns; to prove the correctness of this absurdity, a noted French free-thinker having produced a supply, kept them in sea-water, and obtained, in due time, a handsome fry of young soles, begotten, as he gave out and *believed*, in the body of these crustaceans. Assuming the fact to have been correctly reported, the natural explanation would be, that the eggs of the sole, which are viscid, and readily attach themselves to different bodies, happening to do so in this instance to prawns, were hatched on their persons, as they would, under favourable conditions, have been anywhere else without any help from these shell-fish.

No fish in the ancient world was better known, or in higher repute than this. It was the subject of a Greek myth:* *εὔτροφος* and *ἡδύς*, 'nutritious and delicate,' were the epithets currently applied to it, and one Greek in particular describes it as the best of flat-fish; the highest praise, since these were considered the 'pesci nobili' of the market, and therefore equivalent to saying

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* The fertile fancy of the Greeks suggested them as fit sandals for Ocean Nymphs; a use to which the variety of their size and shape, and their strong adhesiveness, must have well adapted them.

> *Σάνδαλα δ' αὖ παρέθηκεν ἀειγενῆ ἀθανατάων·*
> *βούγλωσσον, ὃς ἔναιεν ἐν ἅλμῃ μορμυρούσῃ.*
>
> They served those 'sandals' of the foamy sea
> Which nimble Nereids, sent on errands fleet,
> Apply protective to their tender feet.

A slave in Plautus, hearing some one order soles, says, in allusion to the name and the supposed use made by these nymphs of their *slipper-fish*, 'Qui quaeso potius soleas quam *sculponeas*, quibus batuatur tibi os senex nequissime.'

they were the best of the best. Soles were served then, as now, fried, *σίζοντες*, when their size admitted it :—

> The cook produced on ample dish
> Hot frizzled soles, those best of fish,
> Embrown'd, and wafting through the room,
> All sputtering yet their rich perfume.*

They were also served under the name Citharus, in a savoury sauce. Epicharmus cites them among the side-dishes served at Hebe's nuptials; an amateur, 'cithari sciens,' sings their praises cooked in a compost of cheese and oil, when they are exquisite, *εἰσὶν ἀκόλαστοι*; and Archestratus, in his poem on 'Good cheer' (Hedypathy), says, to the same purpose, they can hardly be served too elaborately: yet with all this, we may yet doubt whether any of these authorities ever hit upon that most dainty and complex of recipes, the French sole 'en matelotte normande,' the bare recollection of which yet lingers, after years' desuetude, agreeably on our palate. That the larger specimens were sometimes served plain boiled, in preference to any more elaborate mode of cooking, is highly probable, since a doughty Greek authority pronounces that, for easy digestion, there is no way of serving fish so good as 'au naturel.' While soles were generally in high repute, their reputation depended somewhat upon species, and not a little upon locality; even in our own island, how different in respect to quality are the same species, fetched from different districts! When Galen, Xenocrates, and Diphilus speak disparagingly of soles, we must suppose them either to have been sadly warped by the caprice of fashion, or else very unfortunate in their supplies; and it was no doubt a feeling of the injustice of such a censure passed on his

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* Μάγειρος
Σίζοντας παρέθηκε φέρων κνίσσωσε δὲ δῶμα.

favourite food, which extorted the complaint from a great Greek connoisseur, 'Everything is censured in turn, and now they tell me (but I will never believe it) that there is imperfection even in a sole!'

It cannot be doubted that *βούγλωσσος* and solea severally represent the sole: Archestratus speaks of the *roughness* of the *βούγλωσσος*, calling it *ὑπότρηχυς βούγλωσσος*; while Ovid illustrates a striking trait of these fish—viz. their mode of suddenly flashing past when disturbed, with the white under surface uppermost, becoming momentarily what he calls them, 'fulgentes solea candore.' Indeed, the trivial *Greek* name, the 'ox-tongue,'* or simply 'tongue-fish,' names by which the sole is still recognized in Spain and Italy, would, in the absence of all other evidence, have left little doubt as to the identity of the two.

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* Different species of sole had different names assigned to them, as 'dog-tongue,' 'sheep-tongue,' 'horse-tongue,' etc. There is a poor punning joke recorded in a fragment of a Latin comedy, turning upon the equivoque of the same word meaning both tongue and sole, which may perhaps be rendered,

> Fresh tongues for sale, who'll buy, who'll buy?
> Come, sir, will you? No, friend, not I;
> Of tongue enow at home I've got
> In my old wife, Dame Polyglott.

Apropos of whose garrulity, we venture to quote an equivoque of our own, perpetrated on a lady of our acquaintance, very blue as to her stockings, but a kestrel in voice:

> So great a linguist is Corinna grown,
> She's mistress of all tongues except her own.

CHAPTER XVII.

MURENIDÆ.

The Eel.

THE notices of eels left us by the ancients are so ample that a memoir might easily be compiled out of materials collected from their writings. No fish, perhaps, ever enjoyed so wide a celebrity, or has retained it so long. With the exception of Jews and Egyptians, Scotchmen, Mussulmans, and Greenlanders, in modern times, and some leading members of the faculty, then and now, eels have been as largely eaten as they are extensively distributed.* The Jews proscribed them their tables from alleged necessity, the Levitical law being supposed to prohibit eels as unclean. 'Les Juifs d'aujourd'hui,' Lacépède pithily remarks, 'qui habitent souvent des pays où l'anguille est très-commune, mais qu'ils croient comprise dans la défense faite par la loi de Moïse de manger

* The eel is found in the East and West Indies, wriggling under the ice of Greenland, and winding his way without let or hindrance through the very heart of the Celestial Empire: enjoying every temperate latitude, and ubiquitous over the globe as man himself. This was always the case; and few fossil pie-crusts containing fish have been anywhere broken into, where eels have not been discovered. The all but universal spread of this species makes its absence from some waters the more remarkable and difficult to explain. Sometimes physical obstructions seem sufficient to account for this; as, for instance, for its absence from the Lake of Geneva, there being no inlet hitherward up the Rhone: but neither is it found in the Danube, where no such difficulty occurs, and into which, had eels the will, they might easily, like other fish, find a way.

des poissons sans écailles, ne s'abstiendraient point d'un aliment si fin s'ils cultivaient l'histoire naturelle avec autant d'ardeur qu'ils mettent d'aveuglement dans un précepte qui n'était réellement pas compris dans le sens de la loi.' But whence Scotchmen derive their antipathy it would perhaps be less easy to determine. With these few exceptions, the world generally, from the time of Aristotle to the present day, has agreed in bearing unqualified testimony to the merits of this ubiquitous favourite; and amidst the fickleness of fashion, the endless caprices of taste, and the many and various reforms of the culinary code, man's constancy to this creature has truly been remarkable.

Worshiped in Egypt, and made the belly-god of Grecian and Roman voluptuaries, they became in later days, even when stripped of divine pretensions, the 'pesci nobili' of Italy, and the 'adel,' *i. e.* the noble—*subaudi* fish,—(corrupted first into aal, and then eel) of our Saxon ancestors. Egyptian eels being highly esteemed by epicures, not all the divine honours paid to the race by the sons of Ham could preserve them from the jaws of gluttonous Greece. 'Your idol is my idol too,' said Antiphanes, a Greek gourmet, 'but in a different way; you Egyptians worship the eel as a deity, I adore him in a dish!' 'The Egyptians are right in revering eels above their divinities,' observed another banteringly; 'for these must be won over by prayers and vows, while with enough drachmæ in hand any one may make sure of an eel.' 'If I prefer any stranger to you, my love,' says a wheedling Thaïs to her paramour, 'may I be turned into an eel, with Callimedon by my side to devour me.' Thus, high as eels stood in public estimation in Greece, we need not wonder that the practical question, as to where the best were engendered, was eagerly discussed, nor that there should have been as many rival provinces candidates for the distinction as there were cities to compete for the

honour of giving birth to Homer. The Macedonians were proud of their eels; Sicily was equally boastful of hers, especially of those in the neighbourhood of Syracuse; the rivers Euelea and Eloris emulated each other in their eels; one might have expected to hear of such meandering fish delighting in the wanderings of the Meander, and Phrygia accordingly produced abundant supplies; so did the Thracian Strymon, and other habitats too numerous to name; but ancient fame has assigned to Bœotia that pre-eminence which was so keenly contested by all these places. And had eels been as sacrosanct there as in Egypt, noble temples no doubt would have been raised to them among its swamps, with some architraval inscription similar to that on the Paris Pantheon; 'Aux grandes Anguilles la patrie reconnaissante;' whilst at a time when mythology was so little select, that a god Rubigus and a goddess Rubigo sat representatives of blight and mildew at Jupiter's board, the Bœotians might have added the eel as another cœlicola to the motley assembly of their sky, without anybody's finding fault with such ichthyological canonization. They did not however go so far, but, having crowned their eels for sacrifice, were satisfied to throw over them the usual salted cake, and to conclude the ceremony of immolation with a devout prayer to the gods of this time-honoured rite; though they seem not to have understood the motive, yet they never questioned the wisdom. 'It was enough for them,' they said, like true Rechabites as they were, 'to follow all that their fathers and grandfathers had commanded, and to maintain inviolate so old a tradition;' but if pressed unduly in the matter by a stranger witnessing the ceremony to declare its meaning, 'they would,' says Anaxandrides, 'turn sharply upon the querist, and tell him they were not going to explain the customs of their ancestors to barbarians; in fact, in the spirit, if not in the words of Shakspeare's doughty knight, 'They'd give no man reasons on com-

pulsion, they!' The Bœotian eels were all good; the bogs swarmed with them, but one place they have immortalized,—the lake Copaïs. Pausanias says, 'the fish of this lake differ not in kind from those found elsewhere, but the eels are of immense size, and very sweet.'* Athenæus also makes two of his bons-vivans praise these eels for their size and excellence. Lysistrata, after wishing destruction might light on Bœotia and all the Bœotians, amended the phrase by adding this deprecatory clause, 'except the eels!'

The moderns, like the ancients, have their favourite eeleries: the swamps of Comacchio,† near Venice, supply that part of Italy in abundance; in France, Narbonne and Montpelier rank high on account of the bigness of their eels; Aldrovandi speaks of some weighing twenty pounds, and Rondolet records others, from the same locality, of four cubits long, and as thick as a man's arm. The Seine about Elbœuf swarms with them. In Prussia they attain occasionally a length of twelve feet, and are so abundant that from the single locality of Worken a hundred thousand are said to be exported annually to England. In the Elbe, specimens occur of sixty pounds' weight; in the Ganges, orientals stretching to upwards of thirty feet. It would be tedious to quote more foreign sites, but we may mention, as more immediately interesting to ourselves, some English ones;

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* Some preferred salt-water, to lake, eels. *ἡ δὲ λιμναία ἔγχελυς τῆς θαλασσίας ἐστιν ἀστομωτέρα.*

† These swamps are traversed by bushes and artificial hedges, with blind alleys, where they are taken in prodigious quantities ('often sixty thousand pounds weight,' according to Spallanzani, 'in one night'). The fishery takes place twice a year, when the eels go to, and when they return from, the sea. These migrations are often suspended or interrupted, either by a full moon, or by fires accidentally lit in the vicinity of the anguillary encampment.

'the Kennet swift' has long been 'for silvery eels renowned;' whilst the Isle of Eels (Ely,* whence the lords of the manor formerly sucked out no small advantage), Elmore on the Severn, and Ellesmere on the Mersey, all derive their names from the number and excellence of the eels found in their waters. They are very fine near Cambridge too, and there occasionally even rival those of Narbonne in size. Yarrell mentions two taken from a dyke which weighed fifty-six pounds. Finally, Lincolnshire, the Bœotia of England, is highly favoured in its eels according to the testimony of the ancient distich:—

Ankham eel and Witham pike,
In all England is none like.

Touching the birth of eels, much has been conjectured and little positively ascertained: their origin, like that of evil, is a vexed question still; whether they come from eggs, or wriggle into existence little eels, few have been able quite to satisfy themselves. Several theories on the subject were early broached. Oppian supposes an embrace of the sexes actually to take place; after which a strigmentum, or gluey exudation from the surface of the body detaches itself and falls to the bottom, where it is vitalized; not by the co-operation of any apocryphal mud-nymph—some

Young Lutetia, softer than the down,
Nigrina black, or Merdamante brown;

but by an intra-uterine action of the mud itself! for what, asks Oppian, is so engendering as mud? Aristotle calls eels 'the solitary race that have neither seed nor

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* 'When the priests of this part of the country would still retain their wives in spite of whatever the Pope and the monks could do to the contrary, their wives and children were miraculously turned into eels (surely the great into congers, and the less into grigs!), whence it had the name of Ely. I consider it a lie.'—Fuller's 'Worthies of Cambridgeshire.'

offspring.' He thinks also that their origin, as the Greek name indeed denotes, is from the mud. Pliny's theory was, that when eels had lived their day they instinctively rubbed themselves to pieces against the rocks, and that out of the living detritus issued a new brood: a mode of generation which in some lower animal organizations actually takes place. Many as implicitly believed this ingenious hypothesis, as children duly instructed believe that an effete moon is cut up into stars, and that the monthly succession of old ones has gradually been filling the sky with these lesser luminaries ever since the world began to the present hour. Some, dissatisfied with such explanations, observing how easily Virgil contrived to fill his bee-hives from the carcase of a heifer, and not seeing why if bees were so generated fish might not be also, affirmed that eels came from the dead bodies of animals after long immersion in water. Others again modified this notion, and supposed that only the hairs of a horse's tail,* soaked a sufficient time, would at last adapt themselves to a new element and become eels.† Finally, some ancient naturalists, finding the terrestrial origin of eels obscure, had recourse to the skies, and attributed this multitudinous race to Jupiter and a white-armed goddess named Anguilla; accordingly, Archestratus, in his description of an Attic feast, introduces Anguilla, boasting of her Jove-sprung offspring.

In much later times, Van Helmont attributed the birth of eels to the dews of May mornings; whilst not a few

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* Might not such a popular superstition of hair passing into snakes have originated the singular tresses of Medusa?

† Singularly enough, to this day it is a popular superstition in Sicily that one of the common snakes of the country owes its being to a prolonged maceration of this appendage in water, and many a peasant will engage, 'for a consideration,' actually to show the incredulous the process of transformation.

naturalists, with equal infelicity and want of warrant, mistook for these germinal apodes the various leeches, worms, gordii, and other parasites, which infest the gills and bodies of cod, carp, salmon, and sundry other fish. Some again, supposing them to be secreted from observation in yet more recondite parts of these creatures' economy, have sought for them in divers strange places: Leuwenhoek in the urinary, and Valisnieri in the swim bladder; whilst others, when undeterred by Aristotle's warning, have pretended to discover the young grig in the intestinal canal.

Even the moderns do not appear to have made the whole truth more apparent; for though of course all now repudiate the untenable notions of spontaneous generation, equivocal production, or vitalizing proliferous mud, with many other absurdities gravely advanced by ancient worthies, to unravel an eel's birth is still as intricate and hopeless a task for the physiologist as for Piscator to untwist the body of this most line-destroying (*λινοπληγέστατος*) of creatures, when once he has gorged the bait. It is certainly mortifying to be thus baffled by a fish; but unless we adopt a fable, it seems we must submit to a mystery, for who can say they have ever taken a female in roe, or tasted a male's milt? Müller, Mondini, Mitchell, and some few other naturalists besides, declare themselves to have been thus fortunate: they have actually seen both milt and roe in eels: Mr. Sept. Fontaines has discovered the perfectly formed grig 'in utero matris.' John Hunter has exhibited in some beautiful preparations the peculiarities of the sexual organs in eels. And Rondolet, who made excellent use of his eyes, though he occasionally overstrained them, saw,* as he tells us, on one occasion two eels embrace

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* The same professional eyes beheld a lamprey stop a cardinal's ship in full sail; alose rise, like figurantes, on their tails, to dance

each other, just in the same manner that serpents perform the feat. From such evidence it would seem that these fish are really ovoviviparous, producing eggs which are hatched in their interior and come forth young eels. Still when we consider, on one hand, the all but ubiquitous distribution of eels over the globe, and how rapidly they multiply, and on the other, the millions of mankind who have been notoriously familiar with them for two thousand years, many of whom have made them their study, and none of whom have ever succeeded in finding a gravid specimen, it must be apparent that much mystery still attaches to their genesis; in spite of which difficulty, as sure as spring* returns, myriads of tiny eels in serried phalanx are seen, keeping close along the river banks, making head against the strongest opposing currents, an army of pigmies, evidently only a few days old, but without any obvious parentage.

Though the ancients knew nothing of the birth of eels, with most of their extra-uterine proceedings they seem to have been well acquainted; Aristotle mentions that they were *ἀνάδρομοι* at one period, and *κατάδρομοι* at another; or in other words, that they run up rivers in spring and down again in autumn; and this is agreeable to modern observation. The same author, too, remarked on the extreme sensibility of eels to any great and sudden change of temperature; and, writing for his own countrymen, warns them of the danger

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to the scraping of a fiddle; and a variety of other of Nature's conjuring tricks, which one could hardly believe on the testimony of one's own, and certainly on that of no other person's sight; we may perhaps be permitted to hesitate in receiving the above affirmation as conclusive of the fact avouched.

* The time when this occurs is not always spring, but occasionally as late as midsummer. 'At the beginning of July,' as we read in Williamson's 'British Angler,' 1740, 'a stream near Canterbury is to be seen covered with young eels all about the thickness of a straw, and lying on the surface of the water.'

attending their removal to ponds in summer; he recommends therefore, by way of security, that (Greek) eel-ponds, ἐγχελεῶνες, be stocked in winter. We must remember, however, before following this advice, what a different atmosphere to our own an Aristotelian eel was used to. In this cold latitude, eels manage to survive the winter only by keeping close in mud-baths, where they can obtain that equable amount of warmth necessary for their unprotected skins, and without which they cannot exist. It is to escape rapid and violent depressions in the thermometric range, that they frequent estuaries and the mouths of rivers, 'where the commingling and consequent condensation of the fresh and salt waters, raises the temperature by several degrees above that of either the open sea or the river nearer its source.'* It is probable, too, we think, that the knots of eels which float down rivers in autumn, cohere into these masses for the sake of the warmth they derive from such close cuddling. No eels are found either in the Danube or in its tributaries; their waters, being immediately derived from alpine glaciers, are, it would seem, too cold for the naked skin of this scaleless fish.†

When pond eels, either from caprice or from the failure of sufficient supplies, would change their quarters, instinct prompts the whole community to abandon the locality, and to seek another habitat more congenial to

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* Dr. Roots.

† They seem to have a strong instinctive dread of cold water, as appears from the following incident, quoted by Gesner from the 'Annals of Augsburg.' 'One hard winter, when all the pond-fish in this locality were frozen or suffocated under the ice, the eels escaped to land, and getting into some ricks, were found imbedded in the hay, quite dead.' A cold winter will sometimes destroy a large dormitory of them even in Italy: thus at Comacchio (the ancient Bonacus, famed since the days of Pliny for its bed of eels) four millions of those fish perished during one inclement season.

its taste. Sometimes the space to be traversed involves a considerable land journey; and as these fish do not, like anabas, climb trees to sleep, and do not carry water in pouches, like some camel-fish, to moisten their persons, this shifting of domicile can only be undertaken when heavy dews are on the grass; and night and early morning accordingly are generally chosen for the flitting. A nocturnal journey occasions no inconvenience to eels, as it is their common practice to turn night into day; every fisherman knows that they do not begin 'to run,' as it is called, on errands of business or pleasure, till after the sun is gone down; and that the time to catch them is when most of their scaly congeners repose on folded fin. Many a disappointed cockney on the banks of the Lea or New River, who has toiled all day to no purpose, sees, as he is about to bag his rod, and trudge home with an empty basket, the trembling quill recede slowly under the water, and tugs out, to his surprise and delight, a whacking eel; after which he is sure to turn all his subsequent lob-worms to good account. Our little Parisian barber, who was an enthusiastic sniggler, but had no time to exercise this supplementary calling till after his opera 'coiffées' were in their boxes, often paused to relate, as he turned our coxcomb hair under his crushing irons, how he would then frequently steal out to the Seine, ascend the river sometimes as far as Corbeil, take his bank-runners out of the *gibecière*, bait some dozen lines, throw across the stream, and finally adjust to each a little carillon of bells; 'and then, sir,' would continue this vivacious man of wigs, flourishing his irons to cool their ardour (his own was unabated), 'sometimes I get a wetting, and sometimes I catch cold, but whatever else I catch, I always catch eels! Thus I stand,' and he has put himself into the listening attitude of Grisi, in La Sonnambula, 'on the watch for a ring; hark! it comes—tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, in three places at once; and guided by the

sound, for my ear is well practised now, I know exactly where and when to pull, and frequently feel large eels tugging in the dark, and trembling at the end of my line, which I only see when I have brought them close under my nose; 'chacun trouve son plaisir où il le trouve,' and that is mine, sir!'

In Holland* (whence we get our largest supplies) the practice is to fish them by night with a bunch of threaded lob-worms. The ancients, though apparently unacquainted with the Dutchman's Medusian mop for inveigling eels, used a somewhat similar device, of which, though we have already given a prose abstract in our introductory chapter, we must in this place quote Oppian's metric version, as translated not unfaithfully by J. Jones:—

With ludicrous device, in slimy bays,
Some boy the silver-volumed eel betrays:
A sheep-gut's humid length his hand protends,
Below the perforated line extends;
The fish sucks down the bait with rav'nous joy,
And gives the tugging signal to the boy;
To th' opposite extreme his lips adjoin,
And fill with crowded air the widening line:
Swoln with the springy blast the entrail strains,
And binds the captive's throat with airy chains;
Th' imprison'd winds his straiten'd jaws dilate,
And fill his heaving breast with bloated fate;
Panting he rolls, and struggles all in vain,
A floating captive to the youthful swain.
Thus mounts the writhing eel in airy death,
Drawn by the wily boy's compulsive breath.

The ancients were quite as well aware as the moderns that night was the best season for securing eels, when

* London is principally supplied by Dutch companies; they maintain a regular flotilla of vessels for that purpose. A storeship is always lying off Billingsgate, in readiness to meet any unusual demand.

they principally feed; and this knowledge furnishes a clue, perhaps, to the right understanding of a passage in Homer, which the critics, less accurate naturalists than their author, have misinterpreted. When the body of Asteropæus is given up to the fish, the eels appear to come in as distinct claimants,—

> Now roll'd between the banks, it lies the food
> Of curling eels, *and* fishes of the flood.

Homer, however, was probably not ignorant of the prowling propensities of eels in the dark, and the expression therefore denotes no more than that the body was eaten by predatory fish during the day, and by eels at night.

A few words may now be said on a much mooted question, touching the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of eels. In a fish so generally distributed, and so omnivorously disposed, the quality of the flesh will of course vary; and in some foul habitats really deserve all the abuse which has been too indiscriminately lavished upon it by some respectable members alike of the ancient and modern faculty, from Dr. Galen downwards to Dr. Lyster: these, and a yet doughtier doctor than either, Hippocrates, have all proscribed eels, though their proscription was not intended to be general, but to be confined exclusively to certain classes of disease. Hippocrates expressly says, 'this food must be forbidden in tabes and in diseased spleen;' and Galen thus only prohibits it in nephritic complaints, where the gluten might, he conceived, concrete gravel into stone.* The cowls of Salerno, in their code of dietetics, join heartily in these medical caveats against eels, and add that 'doctors of every age have agreed to decry them

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* Beet-root was said to render this mucus soluble, which explains the exclamation of a devoted admirer of the dish—'I will never be separated from you, my eels, cooked in beet!'

as most pernicious to health at all seasons, but especially during the summer solstice:' and in their leonine verses they go the length of declaring that to dine on eels is a sure recipe for spoiling the voice:—

Vocibus anguillæ pravæ sunt si comedantur,
Qui physice non ignorant hoc testificantur.*

We may here however suggest that possibly an indiscreet use of this too luscious food, and not any bad quality in the fish, deserved this blame: these good men might have eaten to repletion, and then finding themselves unable to chant melodiously their post-prandial masses, have supposed the eels, and not themselves, at fault. Neither meds. nor monks however would have been wrong, had their censures been confined to all foul-feeders of this species, which are certainly alike unpalatable and unwholesome: a Tiber eel, for instance, within the range of the city sewerage, is no 'bonne bouche,' and could never tempt even a monk to gluttony and excess. Such a fish Juvenal sets before Virro's humble and obsequious friend, and we hand him up accordingly once more to poetic justice and to public execration:—

Now comes the dish for thy repast decreed,
A snake-like eel, of that unwholesome breed
Which fattens where Cloaca's torrents pour,
And sports in Tiber's flood, his native shore;
Or midst the drains that in Suburra flow,
Swims the foul streams, which fill the crypts below.

Such a situation, *par parenthèse*, reminds us of a passage from Dr. Mitchell's report, quoted by Yarrell, wherein

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* Probably these grey-beards had a passage of Pliny in their mind; but if so, they should, in justice to the eels, have quoted it entire. 'Singular are they holden to bee for to cleanse the humors, either cholericke or phlegmaticke, likewise to cure the infirmities of the spleene. Only they be hurtfull to the throat, and make a man to lose his voice; this is all the harme they do.'

he speaks of city eels winding their way from our Suburral Shoreditch up to the Fleet Market, and relates that formerly, on 'opening the water-plugs in London streets, enormous specimens would occasionally be found, of great strength and activity, and sometimes large enough entirely to stop the passage of water to the houses!* Thus, that they are not always nice in their diet, and then not fit for food, must be quite apparent, but this only happens when there is no alternative but to eat dirt or die; clean water indeed seems as necessary to the well-being as it is congenial to the tastes of eels; and when deprived of it from autumnal rains disturbing the ooze in the rivers, where they swim, immense numbers are carried down, suffocated in the foul and turbid stream. Pliny mentions this fact, and adds, that at the autumnal equinox great globose masses were always secured at the mouth of the Benacus, and also in the then miry waters of the usually clear Mincius.† But while every one must turn with disgust from a drain-fed eel, we confess a strong partiality for those from an uncontaminated stream; and though not willing to join in the extravagant encomiums bestowed by the lovers of good cheer in ancient Greece, can yet read with philosophical forbearance of sundry personifications under which the slimy eel is invoked; now as the goddess of pleasure, —sometimes as the white-armed goddess,—and finally as the Helen of the dinner-table, because every guest strove, like Paris, to supplant his neighbour, and keep her for himself. One of these transcendant Epicureans

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* To prevent this inconvenience, a grating is now placed at the entrance of the main-pipes.

† The peasants in each neighbourhood watch for them at this time, and catch hundreds in nets and a variety of extempore traps, and baskets of wickerwork,—something on the plan, we presume, of the osier weirs and bucks on the Thames and other eel-rivers in England.

affirms, that a man who could tear himself away from the spot where eels were being cooked, must either have brazen nostrils, or no nose at all; and to be rich, and yet not to have tasted eel, Philiteus thought should be numbered among the serious misfortunes of life.

The luxurious Sybarites, who would faint to see a man dig, banished smiths from their towns, and would not suffer a cock in the country, lest he should mar their slumbers by his clarion, had such a sympathy for, and were so addicted to eels, that they conferred valuable privileges upon all persons engaged in the fishery, exempting them from the visits of the tax-gatherer, and remitting the many other governmental and municipal liabilities.* The Romans were as ravenous of eels as the Greeks; and not content with dressing them for the table, they bedizened their favourites (like the 'bœuf-gras' in France) with jewels and gauds for public exhibition.

In ancient days, everything good was confined to the few: philosophy was monopolized by small coteries, while protectionist Epicures and their purveyors laid hands upon the best fish. Eels were not then the 'solatium pauperis,' unless the pauper were also rogue, and even then he was not secure from detection in the fish-market. 'Should you chance to meet a man forlorn in his appearance, shabbily drest, and without any ostensible means of support, a great opsophagist, and a buyer of eels, beware of him: he is a fellow to play footpad, or do worse, to procure his favourite food. Whoever then has been robbed in the city over-night, let him repair early to the forum, and there, should he encounter some dirty, ill-attired customer, cheapening eels at

* Something similar to this has happened in our own country. In Edward III.'s 'Statutum de Allece' (1362) the herring fisheries of Cromer and Clay were exempted from impressment, a privilege they still enjoy.

Micio's stall, let him straightway fearlessly seize that varlet by the throat, and drag him to justice; he is the thief, you may depend on it.' Wide is the difference now, when the poorest man in the metropolis may, if he have a mind, have his slice of eel: in place of a few West-end cetarii supplying the aristocracy only, London, from one end to the other, teems and steams with eels, alive and stewed; turn where you will, 'hot eels' are everywhere smoking away, with many a fragrant condiment at hand to make what is in itself palatable yet more savoury; and this too at so low a rate, that for one halfpenny a man of the million—for whom, in our good land, everything is, we trust, gradually becoming organized—may fill his stomach with six or seven long pieces, and wash them down with a cupful of the glutinous liquor in which they have been stewed. The traffic of this street luxury is so great, that twenty thousand pounds sterling is annually cleared by it. One million one hundred and sixty-six thousand eight hundred and thirty pounds' weight, on an average, are brought from Billingsgate every year by itinerant salesmen, who cook and retail them on their different beats: customers are not entirely confined to the lowest orders; some of the inferior 'bourgeoisie' condescend to frequent the stands of the most noted retailers; and there are instances reported by some of these hawkers, of individuals coming twice a day for months, and eating to the alarming extent of twopence a time, or, in other words, of devouring from thirty to forty lengths of stewed eel, and decanting down their throats six or seven teacupfuls of the hot liquor.

Though our sellers of cooked eels have no disgraceful exemption to boast, of unpaid taxes and city dues, like their ancient brethren of the same calling at Sybaris, yet are they, too, men of importance in a small way, and generally make a good thing out of this savoury

calling. 'On a Sunday,' says one of the humbler members of the confraternity, speaking with infinite *bonhomie* of a more prosperous dealer than himself,—'on a Sunday in particular, anybody would think him, dressed up in his white hat with black crape round it, and his drab paletót with mother-o'-pearl buttons, and his black kid gloves, with the fingers too long for him—the first nobleman in the land!'* Apicius and the Greek knowing ones threw away the heads, according to the instructions of their physicians, who reckoned them poisonous; nor are our street Apicuses less observant of nice cooking, though for more philosophical reasons. 'The boys often come and ask me,' said an eel-pie-man, 'if I've got a farden's worth of heads; now I don't sell heads; the women at Broadway, they tells me, sells them at four a farden, and a drop of liquor; we chucks them away, for there's *nothing to eat on them*—but boys, though, can eat anything.' Whether eel-broth deserves the fame of another fish beverage described by Pliny,† we know not, but there can be no doubt that a warm cupful at early dawn, in a November fog, must be a wonderful comfort to the working classes in London. Our Gallic neighbours are quite as partial to eels as we are: 'Il est peu d'animaux dont on doit se retracer l'image avec autant de plaisir, que celle de la murène anguille,' writes Lacépède, with all a Frenchman's partiality to this friandise; 'elle peut être offerte, cette image gracieuse, et à l'enfance folâtre (*vide* the infant Hercules strangling a snake or eel), que la variété des évolutions amuse, et à la jeunesse, que la rapidité des mouvemens enflamme, et à la beauté, que la grâce, la

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* See 'London Labour and the London Poor.'

† 'This had a name to evacuate the belly and bladder, to scour and mundify the guts, to purge the reines, to take down the rankenesse of bloud and fat, to be soverraigne for the jaundise, gouts, and ventosities.'—*Pliny, Holland's transl.*

souplesse, la légèreté intéressent et séduisent; et à la sensibilité, que les affections douces et constantes touchent si profondément; et à la philosophie même, qui se plaît à contempler et le principe et l'effet d'un instinct supérieur:' he says nothing about gourmets and sauce tortue, though the former constitute a large class of his countrymen, and the latter (in their eyes at least) adds very much to the 'agrémens' of the eel.

Eels are as common a luxury at Naples as with us, only not quite so cheap. The following brief notice, extracted from our journal kept on the spot about five years ago, shows this:—

'Christmas Eve.—Nothing can exceed the bustle and noise of the streets today; all the way up the Toledo is one vast scene of excitement: the beggars whine for alms in stronger accents; the cries of itinerant salesmen are perfectly terrific; the vociferation of buyers who will not be sold, and of sellers who will not be bought, rise high above the shrilling of children, the lashing of whips, the yelling of dogs, the chanting of processions, the bursting of petards, the rolling of drums, and the crashing of wheels. The battle of hard bargains is fought with spirit today, and the subject of contention is—eels; every favourite Italian bonbon, frittura, and dolce is on sale as well, but these certainly form the staple commodity, and carry off all the honours of the day, holding the same place in the affections of the lazzaroni, and being as indispensable a standing-dish for his Christmas, as roast beef and plum-pudding are to an Englishman: or hard-boiled eggs over Romanized Europe at Easter. Men with their ears bored, and adorned, as well as each greasy hand, with huge gold rings, vociferate fiercely, as they slice, with large long knives, unsightly pastes, called 'rustici e dolci,'—messes composed of flour and rancid grease, into which are stuck a heterogeneous collection of unsavoury sweet and sour confectioneries;

fruit-stalls are in great muster: their keepers expecting now to dispose of commodities that have hung some time on hand: not a skewer of baked pears; not an orange or sweet or bitter principles: not a string of rosy tomata, nor bunch of blushing service-apples, can be spared from the gay gilt booths on this grand occasion. Fish-tails however everywhere predominate: here giant lobsters expand and flap their fan-like tails, and bound off the board as if they already felt the hot water. Thousands of 'uongli,' piles of 'frutti di mare,' and every other species of bivalve, with fish of all shapes and hues, familiar to him who has studied the fresco and mosaic coquillages on the walls and in the floors of the houses of Pompeii, lie in confused heaps upon the street flags; but the predominating delicacy, the fish most in request, is, as we have said, eels. This is indeed 'all-eel day;' not a biped of our race in Naples but hopes to eat them in some fashion or other; the very paupers consider it hard if no friendly Christian furnish them with the means of procuring a taste at least of 'capitoni,' though these expensive luxuries fetch not less than six carlini a rotolo, or about a shilling a pound. The dispensers of the delicacy occupy either side of the Toledo from end to end, and there display the curling, twisting, snake-like forms of their slippery merchandise, in every possible pose, and under every variety of suffering; some, suspended over the booths, wriggle round the poles to which they are attached; others, half flayed to demonstrate the whiteness of the flesh, undulate their slimy coils by thousands in large open hampers; and while some are swimming, but in vain, for their lives in wooden troughs of cold water, others are fizzing and sputtering in the midst of hot grease in huge frying-pans over the fire; customers are incessant in their demands, and every man, woman, and child, carries home eels, cooked or uncooked, for breakfast, dinner, supper, and many an in-

termediate meal besides. Surely every stranger, though no enemy to eels, must dream of them tonight, and wriggle uneasily in bed for a week to come, after merely passing down the street; while every Scotchman who shall chance to find himself in the midst of such a scene, will learn doubly to hate and recoil from a church which sanctions such an abomination as food.

These eels come principally from Comacchio, the low country below Venice; they are almost as large as the conger, but far more delicate in flavour; when first taken, they are kept in brackish stews, and from thence sent to all parts of Italy, sometimes, as here, alive, but more commonly chopped in pieces, grilled, and preserved in a pickle of salt and vinegar, shrouded in bay-leaves, and served out to customers on the point of a porcupine's quill.

Not only, however, is the love of eels as predominant in the modern as it was in the ancient world, but the means of indulging it are vastly facilitated everywhere, and, we may add, the modes of presenting them at table greatly improved; for in those days

> Fair cookery to their eyes her well-thumb'd page,
> Enrich'd by prosperous art, did ne'er unroll;
> False 'Guides' misled the culinary sage,
> And froze th' artistic ardour of his soul.

Now the meanest Parisian artiste who should follow Apicius' receipts, would be turned out of his place in a week; Ude might recommend flaying him alive with the eels; Soyer suggest grilling the bungler, or trussing him in an eel-skin, like Justice Shallow. But though exploded, the older methods of dressing this fish were various and intricate; 'Drown them in good wine,' say the monks of the Schola Salernitana, 'then boil in water, and drain quite dry; season with strong spices, and stew down till they become a solid jelly.' A still more an-

cient receipt says: 'Skin, gut, and cut them into portions; wrap in laurel leaves, roast, and serve in bread-crumbs.' Apicius gives two elaborate sauces to eat with eels. The first account we have of *eel pie* occurs in Platina, a comparatively modern writer, who gives the following savoury recipe for it. 'Clean and cut your eel into pieces; add the milt of another fish, or an equal weight of suet very finely pounded; some chopped mint and parsley; an ounce of pine-kernels, and the same quantity of nuts and raisins; season with ginger, cinnamon, pepper, and cloves; lay all on a crust in a pie-dish; sprinkle with oil, and bake in a hot oven; when nearly cooked, have ready two ounces of sweet almonds and saffron bruised together; pass this mixture through a sieve, and spread it lightly over the top.' Another composite method, from the same author, is: 'Oil a pie-dish, and line it with paste; prepare the eels very much in the same way as the last, bury them in the paste, and cover with a crust; when nearly baked, pierce various holes through the upper part, and pour in rose-water sweetened with sugar.' 'The floating fat and grease,' he proceeds to tell us, 'skimmed off, and smeared over the head, is sovereign for making the hair grow.' The following English recipe appears quite equal to Platina's: 'Wash him in water and salt, then peel off his skin below the vent, and not much further; take out his guts as clean as you can, but wash him not: then give him three or four scotches with a knife, and put into his belly and these scotches the tips of sweet herbs, as rosemary, sweet marjoram, winter-savory, thyme, and parsley, and anchovy, with a little nutmeg grated. Your herbs and anchovies must be cut very small, and mixed with good butter and salt. Then pull his skin over him all but his head, which you are to cut off; you may tie his skin about the part where his head grew, so as to keep all his moisture within his skin; fasten him with packthread to

a spit, roast him leisurely, and baste him with water and salt till his skin cracks, and then with butter. Having roasted him enough, let what was put into his belly be mixed with beaten butter for the sauce.'

The tenacity of life in an eel is remarkable. Gesner quotes an Englishman who told him he had seen one come nine times alive out of the trail of a raven, absolutely refusing to be digested; thus proving his claim to just as many lives as a cat, for a tenth trial terminated fatally. 'Postico fallit clientem,' when pouched by a sturgeon, he has been seen to retreat backwards in the same way; and a German tailor, who swallowed one accidentally, was glad enough to get rid of it on the same terms; he does not appear to have cared to repeat the experiment, though Gesner suggests that small eels might possibly be turned to account by doctors in this way, and save their patients many a nauseous draught.* We are not aware that this extraordinary hint has ever been acted upon.

Every one knows, who may have tried the experiment, that to hold an eel with the naked hand is as abortive an attempt as detaining a pig by the tail, after it has been well soaped; or, in morals, to hold a knave to his word; hence the apophthegm, 'anguilla est, elabitur,'—'he's an eel, and is off:' but both rogue and eel may be held tight if we set about it the right way; hence the elliptic proverbial expression, *τῷ θρίῳ τὴν ἔγχελυν*,—to 'hold an eel with a fig-leaf;' which is alluded to in Alciatus's emblem, 'indeprehensum,' where a policeman thus addresses his captive:—

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* Aldrovandi states that horse-doctors gave small eels to their patients, in asthma; and as a purge, sometimes with advantage,—a hint not thrown away, it seems, upon certain horse-jockeys, who, to improve the metal of the steeds they had to dispose of, adopted the same expedient with variation.

Sir thief, you 're nabb'd, and held quite fast—
These *bracelets* are my seal;
Your wrists secured, I find at last
A *fig-leaf* for my eel.

The recognized difficulty of retaining an eel in the hand, has been the subject of several epigrams, both ancient and modern. A Latin one by Gesner, in which he compares man's abortive attempt to hold it, to his equally insecure tenure of life, is not by any means the worst.

How mobile, fleet, and uncontroll'd,
Glides life's uncertain day!
Who clings to it, but grasps an eel,
That quicker slips away.

'To fish for eels,' *ἐγχέλεις θηρᾶσθαι*, is a Greek term of political as well as piscatorial import, implying not only to catch eels by fouling the stream, but to disturb a state for the purposes of aggrandisement: the following epigram, 'in ditescentes publico malo' (against those who enrich themselves at the public expense), occurs in Alciatus' 'Emblems:'—

As wily anglers sniggling eels
The approved device employ,
To foul the current as it flows,
And myriads thus destroy;
So knaves, who starve when all is calm,
And peaceful glides the state,
Procure them loaves, and fishes too,
Soon as they agitate.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MURAENIDAE (CONTINUED).

THE CONGER.

Καὶ τιτυὸν εἶδον λίμνης ἐρικυδέα γόγγρον
κείμενον ἐν λοπάδεσσ', ὁ δ' ἐπ' ἔννεα κεῖτο τραπέζαις.

Matron. Parod.

AS few fish are better than eels-proper, properly served, so nothing in cookery can be worse than a conger under any form of presentation; warned, however, by such proverbs as 'de gustibus,' 'every one to his taste,' and 'tous les goûts sont respectables,' to show forbearance to any aberrations of our neighbour's ninth pair of nerves, we restrict ourself to recording the surprising fact that this fish, like the eel, had from the earliest times friends and partisans in plenty; Greek epicures in particular showing an extraordinary liking for it when very fat (*παχὺν σφόδρα*), and entering into league to bring it into more general notice. At market, while the whole carcase was eagerly sought after, and caught up by rival competitors; the head was considered the really *capital* part: this always fetched a great price at Athens; and there is a story extant of a Grecian Ude, who, though obliged from its scarcity to pay exorbitantly for the article in question, would, he said, had he possessed two heads, have given one to his master for the privilege of keeping that of this fish to himself. With so strong an inducement for fishmongers to decapitate congers, acephalous specimens would probably be as common then as were those of ling in the days of Belon, when he in-

forms the reader he was obliged to figure for illustration a victim of the guillotine, not being able to procure one such gadus in an unmutilated state. Greek hyperbole seems to have reached its climax in describing the delights of a conger feast. One unsavoury Achæan declared that the fragrant odour exhaled from its body in cooking, was sufficient to restore the lost sense of smell to a dead man's nose; and, that boiled in fine brine (ἐν εὐανθεστέρᾳ ἅλμῃ) 'it was a dish to change the human nature into the divine.' To quote but one more specimen of gastronomic rodomontade, a bombastic enthusiast, hearing from his caterer (amidst the names of fish in the market read out for his morning consideration) those of leucisci and conger, stops him to say, that in place of naming fish he was rehearsing a list of gods.

Terence, that accurate observer of minute Græcisms, has put this characteristic trait of congerism into the mouth of an Attic menial, in one of his Latin-Greek comedies: 'Here, Dromo, gut those other fish yourself, but throw me this whacking (maximum) conger into a trough; let there be plenty of water for him to stir about and wash in; when I return he shall be boned, but on no account meddle with him before.' Even dressing a conger was held, it seems, so refined a species of cookery, that neither rank nor genius thought themselves demeaned by the occupation: a poet-laureate might stew one, assisted by his patron sovereign, without disparagement to either. 'Whilst Antagoras,' as we read in Athenæus,' was thus busied, king Antigonus, after helping in the culinary labour, began to wonder whether Homer, after he had deigned to celebrate the achievements of Agamemnon (*q. d.* and I, Antagoras, expect one day as much at your hands), ever cooked a conger.' 'And I,' retorted the poet artiste, 'should wonder yet more if it could ever have entered into the head of so great a man to make so trifling an inquiry.'

All congers were not equally prized. Those from Italy were in most request. Archestratus asserts that these were as superior to all other as 'a plump thummy to a vile coracinus.' Our personal experience being confined to British conger, which is the nastiest viand we ever attempted, the comparison, in the latter clause of the affirmation, may be correct, but if so, it speaks the flavour of a coracinus to be transcendently vile.

Though the conger of the Bay of Naples has received honourable mention from Giannetazzio's Muse, it very seldom occurs in the market, and neither ancient nor modern Rome seems at all to have shared in this seacel enthusiasm of the Greeks; Apicius committing it to posterity with a single recipe. Our own ancestors, who are known to have been coarse feeders generally, imitated the Greeks in this particular propensity; in England, in the days of the early Henrys, or at any rate in those of Elizabeth, this fish was esteemed royal fare, and one of the reasons which Falstaff gives for the Prince loving Poins, is, his addiction to conger. 'He loves him,' says he, 'because their legs are both of a bigness, and he plays at quoits, and drinks off candle-ends for flap-dragon, and eats conger and fennel.' Doll Tear-sheet, in the same play, calls the fat knight, in terms of bantering disparagement, 'a muddy conger;' but from the previous favourable mention of the fish, and from Doll Tear-sheet's very presumable predilection for knights, the emphasis here is clearly to be laid on the qualifying adjective, not on the thing qualified. The term *muddy* conger (no bad type, by the way, of a fat, greasy voluptuary) does not throw any odium, nor is intended by the speaker to convey any, upon clean congers or true knights; but as that first-rate fish the red mullet was sometimes 'lutarius,' or mud-tainted, and tabooed the table; so a conger-fancier would view a conger in this predicament as a spoiled specimen of a good fish; just as a diamond-merchant,

though despising a muddy diamond, does not think less highly of those of a purer water.

Congers are still extensively disposed of in France. We have spoken elsewhere of the refreshing beauty of Italian fish-markets at early morning: those along the coast of Normandy form a striking contrast, from the nauseous superfluity of these creatures; more particularly at Boulogne and Dieppe, where they predominate over all other fish, and fill whole rows of hampers with wriggling coils, a sight which, as they lie twisting and untwisting in endless writhings, and turn up successively their dirty white bellies or brown lubric backs, is enough to sicken the stomach of all but initiated beholders. In Spain also this fish is in the ascendant: it is there not only eaten fresh, but dry-salted, and ground down into flour,* to thicken the common soups of the country, as Parmesan enriches the 'minestras' of Italy. In Willughby's time, large consignments of dried conger-flour were exported from Cornwall to Portugal; the Portuguese employing it in place of oatmeal for porridge. The Orcadeans still consume large quantities in both ways, and get, it is said, considerable supplies from the otters, who bring them on shore for the sake of a small tit-bit, and as soon as it has been secured leave the rest of the carcase for the benefit of the islanders. With us the days for eating conger are passed, and, as with those of 'protection,' without much prospect of a return. This fish is now only the food of shipwrecked sailors, and landsmen who have no other resource.

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* The process of converting dried fish into flour was known and adopted in early times. Thus Arrian mentions that Alexander's admiral touched at an island in the Persian Gulf, the inhabitants of which converted their fish into meal; and having no other food nor provender, fed themselves and their live-stock upon fish-bread, communicating thereby a fishy flavour to the meat.

The Muræna.

Ἔχιδνα θ' ἑκατογκέφαλος, ἥ τὰ σπλάγχνα σου
Διασπαράξει, πνευμόνων τ' ἀνθάψεται
Ταρτησία μύραινα.—*Aristoph.*

The names of Murena and Vedius Pollio are indissolubly connected. Vedius Pollio was, as Pliny informs his readers, 'a Roman gentleman (*i. e.* in the Russian despot's sense of the term), a follower and prime favourite of Augustus, who devised a variety of cruel experiments by means of this fish; causing offending slaves to be thrown into stews where murenæ were kept, that they might be torn, or rather nibbled to pieces; 'not,' says his quaint translator, Dr. Holland, 'that there were not wilde beastes ynow upon lande for this feate, but because he tooke pleasure to beholde a man torn and plucket in pieces all at once, which pleasant sight he could not see upon any other beastes upon lande.' This is the Roman naturalist's version of a story told in various ways by different narrators; from one of them it is made to appear that an additional motive to that here suggested, occasionally instigated this 'gentleman' to these summary proceedings,—namely, to train expert waiters for his table, by making dreadful example of the clumsy or careless. But this inference is merely conjectural; and as Vedius Pollio never designed to state his principles of action, posterity must be content, with Seneca, to remain in ignorance, whether he maintained murenæ merely to indulge in propensities naturally cruel, or with a prospective reference to the table; whether, in short, it was to feed his anger, or to keep the fish in good condition for himself and friends. Whatever his intentions may have been, on one memorable occasion he seems to have relied a little too much on the kind indulgence of his patron. Augustus, ignorant, we may

charitably presume, of the favourite's mode of rearing murænæ, had accepted an invitation to a tripatina entertainment at his house, where he was of course handsomely entertained; the fish went off swimmingly, so did the rest of the dinner, not so the dessert; for, as choice wines were handed round to the company, an unfortunate slave ('unus ex servis'), in trepidation at having to pour out for so august a guest, made an unlucky slip, and broke a decanter (fregit crystallinum). Misfortunes of this sort, in so well conducted an establishment as that of Vedius Pollio, were not allowed to come single: the law of retaliation there for breakage was summary and severe; and over the door of the servants' hall, 'for fools to learn, and wise men to take heed' (ut inducti discant et ament meminisse periti), was written up in uncial characters,

> Whoever breaks the glass or dishes,
> That man becomes the food of fishes.

The culprit therefore knew his doom; but feeling naturally enough a strong disinclination to such a manumission even from such a master, he summoned courage, before the safeguard of the emperor's presence was withdrawn, to rush into the banquet-room, and prostrate on the ground to acknowledge the delinquency of the decanter, and to supplicate Augustus, that he would 'be graciously pleased to condescend' to commute the sentence for some less terrible and tormenting mode of departure out of life than the one proposed. He 'did not care to die, but thought it hard for a man, even though a slave, to be made *esca piscium*, the live bait of fish.' Cæsar, applying to ethics a principle well understood in medicine—remove the cause and the effects will cease—acted humanely and discreetly on this extraordinary occasion: after first setting the supplicant free, he caused the obnoxious fish-ponds to be filled up, and all his

choleric friend's remaining stock of glass to be instantly smashed in presence of the assembled guests—'crystallina ante omnia coram se frangi jussit complerique piscinum.'* Seneca again alludes to this story in his treatise 'De Clementia' (a pamphlet dedicated, with such surprising after-results, to his royal pupil, Nero), where he inculcates virtuous sentiments on the mind of the young emperor with all the freedom of a 'Times' leader, and and asks *him* (!) 'Who could fail to execrate such a monster as this Vedius Pollio, beyond even the aversion felt by his ill-starred slaves, or to deem a wretch who could fatten fish upon living men, himself worthy of ten thousand deaths?' Nor is it to be gainsaid, that this punishment was a most refined species of cruelty, and an invention that would have done no discredit to the Spanish Inquisition, in the palmy days of that black Pandemonium; for the muræna is a small fish of desperate pluck and insatiable voracity, whose mouth, in open violation of Lord Ellenborough's Act, seems expressly formed for 'cutting and maiming,'† and, by reiterated snaps, of doing grievous bodily harm to every living being within its reach; there can be therefore little doubt that a score of trained murænæ fastening upon a naked man,

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* Seneca, De Ira.

† This fish is mentioned in a passage of the 'Frogs,' and, in consequence no doubt of its fierceness, in company with gorgons and hydras, as a monster equally to be dreaded. Æacus, the concierge of the Shades, speaking with the voice of a 'royal and infernal porter,' after venting a long string of maledictions upon Bacchus, under a mistake that he is Hercules (who had carried off his favourite triple-headed bull-dog), winds up the anathema by consigning him to be plucked to pieces by murænæ.

Now inexpressible *Tartesian* monsters
Wrenching thy vitals forth, both heart and midriff,
With furious fangs shall rend and tear thee.

The Frogs (Frere's translation).

would as easily, and much more speedily, gnaw him to the bones, than a colony of mice, with free access to a cheese, will nibble and clear it to the rind; and as the device was inhuman, we need not stay to consider what might be offered by counsel on the other side. Entertaining, as we hope we do, kindly and forbearing feelings to our neighbour, it is far from our wish to see a return of ante-abolition days, nor to have men and maids, whatever their misdeeds, thrown to murænæ in a pond; still, it may be meekly wished that they would, and mildly hinted that they should, learn to show a little more care and precaution while fulfilling their responsible functions in dining and drawing-room. Now, if anything could awaken a proper consideration here, it ought to be, the altered and 'inverted position' in which masters and menials at present stand related. In these days of—*ours*, we were going to phrase it,—but no, of theirs, since it is their own will they follow,—the man has become master, and the master the man. Well has each varlet got up his Dean Swift,* and ripe proficients are they in the art of mischief. The only resource, if there be any, lies in extensively publishing and circulating the story of Vedius Pollio, for the use of the rising generation of Johns and Ames.† The chief point to work would be the contrast between an English servant and a Latin *servus*; and

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* Swift's 'Hints to Servants,' wherein they are taught to do everything they ought *not* to do.

† Vedius Pollio was not the only person who entertained fish on his own kind. Mopsus the Lydian, as we have seen, gave Queen Gatis and her son up to the scaly community of the Lake Ascalon; and Cressa, Agamemnon's mother, was for her misconduct also given by her own father to the deep, for the benefit of sharks and murænas, ὁ φιτύσας πατὴρ ἐφῆκεν ἑλλοῖς ἰχθύσιν διαφθοράν.

That hero's dam, but mighty punk,
Was for her courses lewd
Surrender'd by her sire, and sunk
To make dumb fishes food.

surely, if that were put in the telling way the case admits of, their moral sense must make some response, and declare itself, in showing tenderness for *pâte tendre*, respect for the age of old china, and some reflection, however transient, on the cost of new mirrors: who knows, if the improvement were to begin, what treasures servants might not one day become: when Mary, in place of laying infanticidal hands upon 'biscuit' babies, sweetly sleeping, unconscious of their danger, will handle them gently as her own; and remembering the weakness of her sex, show forbearing indulgence to the very frail, tight-laced shepherdesses placed under her charge; being as vigilant to prevent a slip, as now to conceal a flaw, which sooner or later must come to light, and for which, as for cracked female reputations in general, there is no remedy; a time, above all, when breakages, however irreparable, shall be openly confessed, and 'nobody' cease to bear the brunt of 'somebody's' mischief; when it can be said, in giving the character of an active housemaid, 'she really considers valuables as things to be valued; sweeps cleanly but carefully, brushes lightly, dusts glass and china without partiality, looks virtuously upon her master's *virtù*, and never broke either her word or a porcelain vase all the while she was in our service.' Alas! up to the present hour there is not even the dawn of such bright prospects: ancillary reformation has not yet begun to be thought of; cats are not more detrimental to mice, nor boys to birds' eggs, than these smashing wenches to Saxe, Chelsea, and Sèvres teacups, and too often, in addition to the general instability of all things human, that of china in particular, in such hands, is made painfully conspicuous; and the luckless proprietor, standing amidst the wrack and ruins of his fictile treasures, is fain to seek comfort by adopting breakage as a law of nature and the lot of mortals, and by taking the emblematic view of such misfortunes, suggested by the French epigram:—

Frail objects of man's anxious care,
Alas! like you, how vain
Is friendship's joy, that brittle ware,
And Love, that vase of porcelain.

But to return to the subject of our memoir; the muræna is a small fish, and seldom measures more than two feet and a half or three feet, though much larger ones have been caught; the bulkiest specimen on record, if not apocryphal, is that chronicled by Strabo, weighing eighty pounds. In shape and general appearance the muræna so closely resembles an eel, that but for a very different assortment of teeth, and for certain spots or blotches diffused over the body, a common observer might easily mistake it for an obese species of that genus. This fish, however, is much easier to flay than the common eel, and when flayed, presents a much whiter flesh; the eyes, too, will be found, on inspection, considerably larger, and she has, further, a very singular and characteristic trick, recorded by Belon, of gaping like a goose. Her habitats are estuaries and the open sea; in both situations, according to Rondolet, she manages to lie concealed so well during the winter, as to be seldom procurable. This fish, as Theophrastus informs us, exists, like the common eel, for a considerable period out of water, and avails herself of this power, to go occasionally on *terra firma* to meet a male viper by moonlight, who, before joining company, takes the laudable precaution of depositing his venom under a stone, and as soon as his fishy friend has wished him good-night, recovers and carefully re-absorbs it.

The muræna manifests early a decided tendency to grow corpulent, and as life advances becomes so bloated as to be unable to keep her back under water, which, in consequence, is torrified by the sun: 'non valet exustum mergere sole cutem,' as the great Latin epigrammatist informs us. From this propensity of the body to *float*,

some etymologists derive the name murena from *μύρειν*, to flow; as though to float and to flow were the same thing. Now, it happens that one of her Greek epithets is *ἡ πλωτὴ** *μύραινα καλουμένη* (Archestratus), 'the floater called a murena' (whence the Latin synonym, *flutæ*, of Pliny, and whence also, perhaps, and parenthetically, the fat Yarmouth herrings called 'bloaters,' *i. e.* floaters), there can, therefore, be no doubt that *πλωτὴ* and *μύραινα* do not designate quite the same thing; and if the assigned derivation from *μύρειν* be adopted, as in all probability the right one, we would suggest that the derived word points rather to the characteristic flowing or gliding motion of this fish through the water, than to the fact of its floating on the surface, which has procured it a second name.

Besides these propensities to grow fat and to float, the muræna offers, for a fish, a far more remarkable phenomenon—a tendency to hydrophobia and canine madness: the authenticity of this report rests indeed solely upon the authority of Columella; but as he is a cautious writer, and one not prone to over-tax the credulity of the reader, his testimony, though we believe hitherto unsupported, is entitled to respect, and the point at any rate remains an open one for future investigators to decide. Columella does not say whether the bite from a mad muræna is worse in its consequences than the wounds inflicted by this passionate and ill-conducted fish are at all times held to be.

Waging a perpetual war upon all swimmers smaller or weaker than herself, there are three marine foes in particular upon whom the muræna delights to fasten her

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* The verb *πλώω* signifies to swim and to sail; but as men swim and vessels sail *on the surface*, the radical meaning of *πλώω* is, in fact, to float. Euripides uses the word *πλωτὴρ*, floater, for a sailor or Jack-a-float.

teeth—the crab, the cuttle, and the conger.* These four hate each other with intense and equal cordiality, and to that extent that it is not safe for a cook to leave any two of them together even for a few minutes while preparing separate saucepans for their reception; for as to immersing them in the same water, 'no wise man,' says Xiranides, 'any longer makes that mistake; the experiment has been tried over and over again, and,' continues the unblushing author, 'always with one result, viz. that on removing the lid of the stew-pan, one or other of the combatants is missing, and, notwithstanding its fierceness and superior strength, generally the murena.'

Oppian's best bits are his animated descriptions of fish sea-fights; here he is quite Homeric, and so much at home in all the details of their submarine tactics and strategies, that he appears almost as much a fish as a poet; the mortal engagements he celebrates, are as exciting as the tussle between Greek and Trojan; and preferable in this, that all his belligerents pull each other to pieces without any responsibility on their part, or shock to moral sense on ours:

> Unwise we blame the rage of warring fish
> Who urged by hunger *must* supply the wish;
> Whilst cruel man, to whom his ready food
> Kind earth affords, yet thirsts for human blood.

On this account we prefer his mailed heroes to Homer's, and being fairly instructed, *in limine*, that fish have neither innate ideas of justice nor pity, but that irresponsible anarchy, bloodshed, and confusion reign through the waste of waters, we listen straightway, and learn with complacency unalloyed by any compunctious visitings,

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* Perotti is quoted by Aldrovandi as having often witnessed combats between the conger and murena, at Pozzuoli, in the Bay of Naples.

how these inhabitants of the high seas attack, mutilate, and devour each other;—

> How one and all, voracious nor unjust,
> Obey their passions, and indulge their lust.
> When hunger calls, they scour the seas for food,
> Pursue the weaker; by the strong pursued.
> All the night long they constant watches keep,
> Nor one unguarded moment give to sleep;—

how in particular the muræna, gliding from the summit of a deep-sunk rock, goes rolling through the billows in quest of the Briarean cuttle, till at length, getting sight of one creeping close and hugging the shore, with the vain hope of eluding observation, she makes rapidly towards him; the cowering cuttle, unable to advance or retreat, stands aghast, and the next instant finds himself writhing in the fell grip of the tyrant's teeth: but, forced into unequal combat, he plies each vigorous arm in rapid succession, and, strong in the energy of despair, coils them round the body of the murderous muræna, 'striving to strangle her before he die;' the sleek and slippery muræna escapes like water from this dangerous situation, taking savage advantage of those complicated movements which serve to bring different parts of the victim's body athwart her blood-stained jaws: 'as two lusty wrestlers, struggling in each other's arms, and bathed in sweat, exhaust every resource of the art, and twist and twine their supple limbs in the throes of the keen contest, so does the reeking cuttle gyrate and straighten, wind and unwind his vigorous feelers, and though rigid and tetanized with pain, offer a determined resistance;' at length, having lost several of these useful appendages, the mutilated testacean suddenly darts away from his assailant, and would seek to elude further outrage by pressing into the angles of some jutting rock, and endeavouring to pass for a portion of it; but this device is speedily detected by the bloodthirsty muræna, who, following close, pauses for a

few seconds before renewing the attack, to hold some such Homeric taunts as the following: 'Say, crafty cuttle, of whom are you afraid? or do you hope, by thus lying close, to take me off my guard? we'll see how long you care to personate a stone, and whether this rock shall afford an asylum against my teeth.' Then making a last onslaught, she seizes the body, and begins to swallow it quick; the cuttle's arms, we are told, never relinquish their hold, but are seen still clinging to the rock even when the mangled body has disappeared down the murena's throat; 'so (for Oppian dearly loves a simile, in a captured town given up to the license of war, where women and children are dragged into a cruel captivity, some bloodstained soldier seizes an infant wrapt round its mother's neck; but the more he tries to detach, the tighter only it clings to her breast; thus does the wretched cuttle clutch convulsively the rocky asylum as long as he has one arm left to clasp it.'

But, however destructive the murena may be to the cuttle, by a just retribution she herself falls a prey to the crab: here, again, Oppian is graphic in describing the encounter, and sets forth the misfortunes of the late successful Amazon with as much gusto as he recorded her triumphs. He pictures the roving crab piratically searching for and discovering the murena's lair, then raising his two ponderous claws on high, and emitting a lusty war-note, he seeks, nor seeks in vain, to provoke his inveterate foe to deadly battle; and as some martial leader, cased in trusty mail, proud of many achievements in arms, and confident of success, stalks forth in the van of his troops brandishing a weighty lance, while he calls for a champion from the opposing ranks, and rejoices to see one step forth at the challenge, so the crab, having by this act of defiance provoked the murænа to single combat, exults to see her rush suddenly out of ambush, and with ireful aspect, fixed head, and her whole body stiff

with rage, dart forward to the attack: furious, and with open mouth, the assault is commenced, but without making any impression upon the well-protected cancer; in vain she assails him with all the force of her vindictive jaws; the strongest teeth must weary to no purpose against his rigid shell; repelled, as if from the surface of a rough stone, their utmost efforts fail, and by the impetuosity of the bite are broken off short and loosened in the sockets. Though foiled in the attempt, the murena, still meditating mischief, and thirsting for revenge, remains motionless, regardless of peril or unconscious of her impending fate, till the active crab, advancing an enormous claw, seizes her body, and gradually tightening his grasp, holds the hapless fish as in an iron vice. Now, every effort to escape is but a prelude to further suffering; constrained by superior force, convulsed by pain, and pinioned to the spot, she twists and writhes in hopeless anguish, and seeks, like her victim the poor cuttle, by bending her own body round that of her tormentor, to crush him to death; and with no better success; for at every fresh struggle the points and prominences of the unyielding shell inflict more bruises and wounds, hastening the *dénouement*. Worn out by pain and fatigue, she succumbs at last, and dies covered by a number of unsightly gashes of her own procuring: 'as the savage pard,' says Oppian, 'surrounded and at bay, lashed into fury by the shouts of foes, rushes upon some veteran huntsman skilled in the slaughter of wild beasts, and, with open mouth, presents her throat as a sheath to the murderous steel; so, carried away by blind rage, the murena rushes headlong on destruction.' Oppian finds another comparison for the warfare carried on between these two enemies, in that which subsists, he says, between the porcupine and the serpent: the scene selected for whose strife is the recess of a deep forest, where no sooner does the prickly quadruped discern the gliding foe,

than instantly withdrawing his head, he rolls into a spherous ball, and waits to be attacked; the serpent, darting instantly upon the globular mass, essays all round to find some vulnerable part exposed to her deadly fangs, but in vain! no teeth can penetrate, or even reach a body under cover of such long quills; the porcupine now becomes the assailant; rolling round and round upon himself, he wounds the unprotected skin of the snake, and causes a bloody sanies to issue from divers points; the trailing reptile, stung to the quick, and exasperated with pain, wraps her body round the prickly globe, and completely covers it in coils; more deeply wounded by this action, fury and despair make the last efforts of the coluber terrible to witness, while, firm and immobile under the sure protection of his sharp-pointed mail, the porcupine maintains his globose shape, and patiently waits under arms either till the serpent dies transfixed, or, should his strength hold out, till both expire together.

The astuteness of the murena in escaping danger is, if we may believe ancient authors, very remarkable; for, instead of swallowing the angler's hook like other fish, she bites it off above the bait, and then descends leisurely to examine and detach it: when surprised, too,—no, she is never surprised—when enclosed unexpectedly in a net, with the utmost presence of mind this Ulysses of fish swims deliberately round, fixes on the largest and laxest mesh, and having tampered with and cut it across, finally wriggles her body through, and thus opens a passage which all the remaining murenæ are careful to follow.

The murena most in repute came from Sicily; the Tartesian, from Tartessus, in Spain, were also highly thought of, and this accordingly became one of its epithets.

This fish was the delight of the ancient Romans, not only to eat (as Horace recommends, in roe, as the first delicacy at a tripatina entertainment, dressed according to one of Apicius' recipes, and served on a chrysendeton,

or gold service-dish), but to rear, to tame, and to teach. Plutarch speaks of those that L. Crassus brought up almost by hand, who acknowledged his presence by springing out of the water whenever he came near; he was wont to deck them with rings and personal ornaments such as men give their mistresses, and Porphyrius says, that their loss was a severer grief to him than the death of his three children. Antonia, too, exhibited hers at Bauli, near Naples, in the grounds of Drusus, bedizened in the same way; and poor Hortensius the orator never quite got over the decease of one favourite murena. In short, all the great men vied with each other in this extravagant fish passion, and, says Cicero, 'deemed no moment of their lives more happy than when these creatures first came to eat out of their hands.'

The noble family of Licinii, as we learn from Macrobius and Varro, to express their admiration for this fish, took the name of Murena, in addition to their own, just as, out of compliment to the Aurata (golden-head), the Sergii added that designation to their patrician patronymic.

Before taking leave of the murænas, a few words remain to be said of that wonderful fish, the Gymnotus. The gymnotus belongs to a small electric coterie composed of five individuals, whereof three belong to the bony, and two to the cartilaginous tribes of the deep. The cartilaginous electricians are a tetredon, and the narke skait: the bony species are a trichiuris, a silurus, and the gymnotus electricus. Coercive powers equal to those once falsely ascribed to the stay-fish, and exercised on animal movements, are actually inherent in these species, which, though scarcely so big as a large conger, can stay the furious shark rushing after his prey, stun leviathan at a distance, and lay the fiery courser low beside him. As no one has given a more lively picture of this formidable creature's powers and mode of attack

than Humboldt, we select, as they may not be familiar to all our readers, the following highly interesting paragraphs.

'Having remained for three days, to no purpose, in the town of Calabozo, and received but a single living eel, and that rather weak, we resolved to proceed to the banks of those pools in which the gymnoti abound, and make our experiments in the open air . . . . We were greatly surprised when we were informed that the Indians were going to catch about thirty half-wild horses in the neighbouring savannahs, to employ them in fishing for these electric eels . . . . While our host was explaining to us this strange system of fishing, a troop of horses and mules arrived. The Indians had made a sort of enclosure around them, and pressing them closely on all sides, forced them to enter the water . . . . Being provided with very long reeds and harpoons, they placed themselves around the basin. Some of them mounted upon the trees, whose branches overhung the surface of the water. They all prevented, by their cries and the length of their reeds, the horses from attaining the shore. The eels, stunned and confused by the noise of the horses, defended themselves by the reiterated discharge of their electric batteries. For a long time they seemed likely to gain the victory over the horses and mules; these were seen in every direction, stunned by the frequency and force of the electric shocks, to disappear under the water. Some horses, however, rose again, and in spite of the active vigilance of the Indians, gained the shore exhausted with fatigue; and their limbs being benumbed by the electric commotions, they stretched themselves at full length upon the ground. I could have wished that a skilful painter had had the opportunity of seizing the moment when the scene was most animated. The groups of Indians surrounding the basin; the horses with their manes bristling, terror and anguish

depicted in their eyes, trying to escape the storm which surprises them; the yellowish and livid eels, which, like huge aquatic serpents, are swimming on the surface of the water, and pursuing their enemy: all these objects presented, without doubt, the most picturesque assemblage imaginable. I remember the superb picture of a horse entering a cavern, and frighted at the view of a lion; the expression of terror is not stronger there than what we witnessed in this unequal contest .... When the combat had lasted a quarter of an hour, the mules and horses appeared less affrighted; they no longer bristled up their mane, and the eye was less expressive of suffering and fear; they were no longer seen to fall backwards; and the eels, swimming with the body half out of the water, and now flying from the horses instead of attacking them, began themselves, in their turn, to approach the shore.'

Poisonous Fish.

After the above five orders of osseous or fibrous species with complete and movable jaws, we come to the Plectognatheans, *i. e.* fish characterized by their maxillary bone being soldered on the side of the inter-maxillary, which alone forms the jaw, and to which the palate is dovetailed by a suture with the cranium, without any power of motion. In this section several poisonous kinds occur: to one division belong those bristling balloon-fish, Diodons and Tetraodons, which occasionally ornament the ceilings of chemists' and curiosity-shops at home, and abroad are placed as weathercocks on steeples and high trees; to another, the beautifully variegated tribe Balistes, which, from the feeble treble emitted by its members when first caught, used to be called 'goats' by the ancients, and now, for the like reason, 'old

wives,' 'vieilles,' and 'alte Weiber' by England and her present allies and neutrals. These 'old wives' form a splendid regiment, and are admirably equipped for action or retreat, having a terrible weapon on the back, which can be suddenly raised and fixed when their purpose is to attack; and being also possessed of a singular power of suddenly collapsing their bodies and disappearing before a foe, whom they may not think it prudent to cope with. They are, it appears, not less dangerous to encounter at table, than alive and in their own element. Dr. Meunier, a physician of the Isle of France, reports that this plectognathean contains a very virulent poison, which, acting primarily on the nervous tissue of the stomach, produces first violent spasms of that organ, and shortly afterwards muscular contractions of every part of the body; a very short time after eating, he says, the whole frame is racked with spasmodic action, the tongue becomes thickened, the eyes fixed, while the muscles of the face twitch convulsively; the breathing is very laborious and difficult, and the patient is often carried off in a paroxysm of extreme suffering. The means taken to avert such sad consequences are simple, but, to have any chance of success, must be had recourse to at once; they consist in first administering strong emetics, to bring away every particle of the poisoned meat, then following up the treatment by giving oils and other demulcents to allay the subsequent irritability of the stomach; later, vegetable acids and tonics, as they can be borne, complete the cure. It appears, however, from his account of a soldier who had imprudently eaten a part of one of these old girls, but ultimately recovered, that convalescence was very slow indeed, and that the man had pains in the arms and legs for a considerable period, which it required, says this ptisanier doctor, 'tamarind-tea, lemon-juice, and other minoratives,' successfully to combat, and at last remove. The flesh of the common hedgehog dio-

don, little as there is of it, is in like manner reported 'dangerous;' and another species, the diodon atinga, unless the gall be first removed, is, according to Pison, equally unsafe; the symptoms induced in this case are 'blunted sensibility, stiffened limbs, a palsied tongue, rapid prostration of the vital powers, colliquative sweats and death.' The tetraodons seem as unsafe for food as the diodons. The T. lineatus of the Nile is held by the Egyptians as very poisonous, and sedulously avoided in consequence. Another species, however, near akin, the furube of Japan, though equally dangerous, is found to be too delicate to resist. According to Osbeck, this poisoner will cause death in two hours after he has been swallowed. An imperial decree expressly forbids the Japanese soldiers to eat furube, and enforces this prohibition by making an express provision that no son may replace his father who has been slain by eating this fish: notwithstanding, however, the frequency of *sinistres*, the furube is in high repute amongst epicures, and sells at a much higher price than any other fish.'* The ancients were well acquainted with, and have left us many

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* We do not know whether it is usual with these gourmets to adopt the precautions had recourse to by the lovers of good cheer in the West Indies, previous to eating a fish they call the baracouda. A friend of our own, who nearly lost his life at a marriage party with several other guests, co-partakers of the fish, gave us the particulars of their common seizure, which occurred very shortly after the conclusion of the repast, and was in its character very similar to that described by Dr. Meunier from eating the balistes. In the end, after full vomiting, they all recovered, under the administration of enormous doses of laudanum. On mentioning the circumstance to a West Indian, he informed us that the accident must have proceeded from culpable neglect on the part of the host, who, before introducing such a fish to his guests, should (*knowing how dangerous it was*) have first given the head to one of his Negroes to dine upon, which, having taken effect on him, would effectually have prevented all that followed. He in-

recitals of poisonous fish. There are some, says Ælian, in an Armenian stream, which are black, but not unpalatable in flavour, whereof if any man or beast do but taste, he immediately dies: *ἤν δέ τι τούτων γεύσηται ἢ ἄνθρωπος ἢ θηρίον παράχρημα ἀπόλλυται.* He adds, that as the land is overrun with wild beasts, the Armenians, having previously dried these fish, knead them up into flour, and so poison all kinds of animals by laying pellets of the paste in their track. He further adds, that, in grinding these fish into powder, the huntsmen take the precaution to tie something over both mouth and nose during the operation, lest a pinch of the powder merely sniffed up should prove fatal to them. Every beast which eats ever so small a pellet of this paste, speedily dies. Pliny mentions the same fact on the authority of Ctesias; and further, that some fish near the source of the Danube are reputed equally fatal; also that 'the self-same accident as touching fish is reported of a pool in Lydia, called of the nymphs.' Theophrastus states, that in an Arcadian stream both the water and the small fish that inhabit it are extremely deadly; this last author, besides poisonous, speaks also of fish possessing other singular qualities of flesh: thus at the isle of Pela and city of Clazominæ, they are all bitter; while those about Scylla, in Sicily, are contrariwise sweet; some species near Cephalonia, Paros, and Ampelos, are so salt that they may be taken for salted fish; all which diversities of flavour he attributes, we know not how truly, to diversities in their food.

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formed our incredulity that this was the common way of dealing with quaco and baracouda in some of the Leeward Islands. This communication took place before the Emancipation Act, since which period, we have not heard what plan has been adopted by West Indian proprietors, to eat this 'anceps cibum' in comfort and security.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHONDROPTERYGIANS.

The Shark and his Cartilaginous Cousins.

Shark and Lamprey.

Far as the breeze can bear the billows' foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home.—*Byron.*

Ἴτ' ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἐριννύες
γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε, πανδήμου ἀλός.

Καλὴ τυραννὶς, πολλὰ τἄλλ' εὐδαιμονεῖ,
κἄξεστιν αὐτῇ γ' ἐσθίειν ἃ βούλεται.

AS free as a bird, says the proverb; as free as a fish, say we; for if fish be not their own masters, who are? No other creature has half the facilities for shifting quarters and changing domicile that he has. Furnished with a body in itself a perfect locomotive, a vigorous tail for a piston, and cerebral energy in lieu of steam, the sea itself affords a level for railroads of communication and transport in every direction, and the North and South Poles are the only natural terminuses to the journey. Man cannot compete with fish here; for few, from various lets and hindrances, are permitted to vagaboudize at will, and of those who might be disposed to indulge the fancy, fewer still possess the means for its accomplishment. The yacht animal enjoys himself, no doubt, as he cruises about the high seas for amusement; but this pleasure has risks, as well as obvious limits. Squalls may upset or whirlpools engulf him and his frail bark; her mast may be struck by lightning, her keel may run upon a rock; her rudder be carried away; her sails torn to ribbons; her ribs melt in the red glare of fire on board; or if she adventure too near the

poles, the crew is liable to be hemmed in, and fortunate if, after six months' bumping, 'nipping,' and crushing, they bring her off at last, and manage to escape white bears, famine, and an icy grave. Besides these liabilities to mischief, the wants of those on board compel frequent forced halts; here for coal, there for water: and then there are sundry runnings into harbour in dirty weather, to the further delay of the ship's voyage; all which 'touchings,' in order to 'go,' must often sadly retard a sigh in its passage from Indus to the Pole.

In birds, wings supply the place and greatly exceed the efficiency of sails; but even wings have their limitations of action, and are also subject to many mishaps. Birds can neither soar heavenward nor skim far across the waters without being made sensible of this; the stoutest pinion cannot long beat the frosty air of high altitudes, and remain unnumbed; thus high and no higher may the eagle aeronaut mount; whilst of birds of passage, how many thousands, trusting, like Icarus, to uncertain wings, drop and die in the transit to another continent, and cover whole roods of ocean with their feathery carcases!

Quadrupeds, again, are yet more restricted in their wanderings over the earth: natural obstacles are continually presenting so many bars to their progress; the dry and thirsty desert where no water is, inaccessible snow-capped mountain-ridges, the impenetrable screen of forest-trees, the broad lake, the unfordable and rapid river, the impassable line of a sea-girt shore; any of these impediments are enough to keep beasts within an area of no very wide range. Thus it fares with all creatures, denizens either of earth or air; but none of these obstacles impede the activity of fish. They may swim anywhere and everywhere through the boundless expanse of waters; and, in defiance alike of trade-wind or storm, may traverse the open seas at every season, surrounded on all

sides with suitable food, and finding at different depths the temperature most congenial to their health and comfort, whether at the torrid or frozen zone. Some of the scaly tribe, to whom fresh water is not less palatable than salt or brackish, may even go far inland, visit without a 'Guide' lakes hitherto undescribed by tourists, or follow, à la Bruce, the meanderings of some mighty river from its mouth up to its sources. Supported in a fluid of nearly the same specific gravity as their own, the upper portion of the body throws no weight upon the lower, and weariness is impossible. Where there is no fatigue, repose becomes unnecessary; and accordingly we find these denizens of the deep, like their 'mobile mother,' the sea, 'who rolls, and rolls, and rolls, and still goes rolling on,' never perfectly at rest. When the day has been passed in swimming, and the evening paddled out in sport, away float these everlasting voyagers through the night, and are borne in a luxurious hydrostatic bed, wherever the current chances to carry them; and, with no other trouble than that of occasionally opening their mouths for a gulp of fresh air, on they go, till early dawn, bursting upon a pair of unprotected eyeballs, gives their owners timely notice to descend deeper, and to strike out with fins and tail in whatever direction waking thoughts may suggest. To such tourists Madame de Staël's definition of travel, 'le voyage, un triste plaisir,' cannot of course apply. Their whole journey indeed through life is singularly placid, conducive not only to health, but also to extreme longevity; for though it be not true, as affirmed by Aristotle, that fish have no diseases or 'plagues,' it is nevertheless certain that large fish, well supplied with little ones for food, and so armed as to be capable of defending themselves against violence, will live several centuries—a longevity to which immunity from the risks of sudden changes of temperature, a secured sufficiency of wholesome diet, and their

established habit of taking things coolly, all no doubt materially contribute. So long a period allowed for growth, and such a fine field too for development as the open sea affords, will readily explain the enormous size reached by some fish of rapacity in the vast watery domains, particularly those ocean pirates, the dreaded and dreadful sharks; whose atrocities, though perpetrated, are not written in water, and who, 'overwhelmed with cruelty,' yet 'come to no misfortune like other' fish; whose eyes swell with fatness, and who do even as they lust; raging horribly everywhere like wild beasts, the terror of navigators and the scourge of the deep!

The ancients have left us many lively representations of the sanguinary proceedings of these ill-omened Squali, whose 'reign of terror,' after four thousand years of historical renown, remains as firmly established over the waters as ever. In early times, several different species of sharks were confounded; but as the knowledge of the sea and its stores increased, it was at length ascertained beyond controversy that these cartilaginous monsters, all of whom are alike daring and voracious, and terrible according to their size and strength, are of various species. Under the heading 'Canicula,' Pliny relates, in his usual animated and pleasing style, the proceedings of one of these, which is evidently our Tope, the Squalus milandra of the French, and La Samiola of the Mediterranean, where they still abound, to the terror of the Italian and Maltese boatmen and the detriment of their nets. Though this canicula averages but twelve feet, he is equal to the gigantic white shark in *cynopic* impudence and rapacity; he has often been known to seize sailors standing beside their boat, and tardy bathers still in their shirts. The poor pearl-divers of the Indian seas have however most reason to dread his approach; which they meet in the same manner as was practised by this class of men in the days of Pliny.

The dyvers, says he, that use to plunge down into the sea, are annoyed very much with a number of Sea-hounds that come about them, and put them in great jeopardie .... much ado they have and hard hold with these hound-fishes, for they lay at their bellies and loines, at their heeles, and snap at everie part of their bodies that they can perceive to be white. The onely way and remedie is to make head directly affront them, and to begin with them first, and so to terrifie them; for they are not so terrible to a man as they are as fraid of him againe. Thus within the deepe they be indifferently even matched; but when the dyvers mount up and rise againe, above water, then there is some odds betweene, and the man hath the disadvantage, and is in the most daunger, by reason that whiles he laboureth to get out of the water he faileth of meanes to encounter with the beast against the stream and sourges of the water, and therefore his only recource is to have helpe and aid from his fellowes in the ship; for having a cord tied at one end about his shoulders, he straineth it with his left hand to give signe of what daunger he is in, whiles he maintaineth fight with the right, by taking into it his puncheon with a sharp point, and so at the other end they draw him to them; and they need otherwise to pull and hale him but softly: marry, when he is neere once to the ship, unless they give him a sodaine jerke, and snatch him up quickly, they may be sure to see him worried and devoured before their face; yea, and when he is at the point to be plucked up, and even now ready to go abourd, he is many times caught away out of his fellowes hands, if he bestir himself not the better, and put his own good will to the helpe of them within the ship, by plucking up his legges and gathering his body nimbly togither, round as it were in a ball. Well may some from shipbourd proke at the dogges aforesaid with forkes; others thrust at them with trout speares and such like weapons, and all never the neare; so crafty and cautelous is this foule beast, to get under the very belly of the bark, and so feed upon their comrade in safetie.

Passing by an 'angel' shark, whom it is very dangerous for a fisherman to entertain unawares in his net,* and various kinds of other large dog-fish, now accurately

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* Un pêcheur anglais, ayant pris un angelot dans ses filets, en fut fort mal traité.—*Lacép.*

distinguished but not discriminated by the ancients with sufficient precision for us to be able at present to identify them, we come to two squali, the portraits of which, like that of the canicula, have been so well delineated by them, as to render the recognition of the originals perfectly easy, and exempt from any possibility of mistake. One of these is the saw-fish of modern writers, described by Aristotle under the name of 'pristis,' and by Pliny under the Latin synonym serra. The saw, or rake, of this shark is at first a supple cartilaginous body, porrect from the eyes, and extending sometimes fifteen feet beyond them. In the earlier stages of development it is protected in a leathery sheath, but, hardening gradually as the ossific deposition proceeds, its toothed sides at length pierce the tough integument; the serra then flings away the scabbard, and becoming, after a very little practice, a perfect proficient in the use of his weapon, is always ready for instant assault upon any body or thing that may or may not offer to molest him. Thus formidably armed, and nothing daunted, the larger and fiercer the adversary, the more ardently does the serra desire to join battle; above all, the destruction of the whale seems most to occupy his thoughts and to stimulate his valour and vindictiveness; no sooner is one of these unwieldy monsters descried rolling through the billows, than our expert sabreur rushes to the conflict, and, carefully avoiding the sweep of his opponent's tremendous tail, soon effects his purpose, by stabbing the luckless leviathan at all points, till, drained of blood, he dies at last, like Seneca, anæmic, in the bath. Martyns relates a rencontre of this kind which he witnessed off the Shetland Isles, but at a distance, not daring to approach the spot, as the factitious rain, spouted up from the vents of the enraged sea mammal, poured down again over the liquid battle-field in torrents sufficient to have swamped a boat. He watched them a long time as they

feinted, skirmished, or made an onslaught; now wheeling off to a short distance, now renewing the charge with redoubled fury. Foul weather however coming on, he did not see the issue of the fray; but the sailors, familiar with such scenes, affirmed that they generally ended in the death of the whale; from whom, when 'in extremis,' the victor would tear out and carry away the tongue—the only part he cared for—and leave the whole huge carcase in their possession.

The other well-defined ancient squalus is the zygæna, the modern Jew-* balance- or hammer-fish, and were these not aliases enough already, the T-fish might be suggested as another; the down-stroke of this letter representing the body, and the horizontal bar at top the singular transverse head; at the opposite ends of which two very salient yellow eyes are situated, commanding from their position an extensive field of vision. When anything occurs to ruffle the temper of the savage, these jaundiced eyeballs suddenly change to blood-red, and projecting in their orbits, roll and glare fearfully. The portal of the mouth opens, and a huge human tongue is thrust forth, swollen, inflamed, papillated, and surrounded by a whole armoury of rending teeth; presenting to view a creature so strange, hideous, and malevolent, that nothing in nature can be conceived more unattractive. The domestic circle of the 'squalus zygæna' numbers every year twenty-four new members; this fearful fecundity of the mother is providentially kept in check by the violent decease of most of the young hammer-heads 'in cunabulis.'† Untaught by Dr. Watts or their parents to

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* So called from a supposed resemblance to the head-dress worn by the Jews at Marseilles.

† This tender period of life seems in all creatures, even the most cared-for, one of extreme danger. The melancholy theme of *baby* mortality has been finely touched upon by Virgil:—

know better, these little cacodemons seem to consider it not at all

'A shameful sight,
For squali of one family to snarl, and snap, and bite,'

but commit the most cold-blooded fratricides, and even eat one another (proh pudor!) without any remorse; besides which, when grown-up relations come on a visit, the younglings are not secure from 'battle, murder, and sudden death,' for a single moment, save when directly under the paternal nose; so that as a natural consequence, few of the nefarious brood survive childhood, or ever attain to their full maturity of size and malice. Of such as escape these infantine dangers, many in after-life fall victims in hostile encounters with several larger congeners; in particular, with the white shark.

The average length of the S. zygæna is only eight or nine feet, but he does not fear to confront the powerful

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'Sudden there rose along the Stygian coasts
The sadly wailing cry of infant ghosts;
From warm and milky bosoms rudely torn,
And life's young hopes, they wander here forlorn;
Nipt in their prime, the day of darkness came,
And gave their slender bodies to the flame.'

MS. Translation.

In Virgil's time there were no statistical reports, and the percentage of infant mortality was, doubtless, far greater than in our own; yet, even now, the reader will be startled to learn, that full *thirty-five per cent.* of all that are born die under *ten* years of age. Well, then, may society bless the efforts of those useful and philanthropic men who have at length succeeded in establishing a hospital[1] in London expressly for sick children, and are now looking to the public for funds to support and maintain it. May their pious labours prosper! may some who read our trifling work not forget this seriously suggestive note and indirect call on their beneficent interposition in its behalf.

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[1] Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond-street.

requin himself, and fight him too, with such pluck, resolution, and fury, that though the greatly superior weight of the other at length prevails, the victor does not leave the bloody battle-field scatheless, but with a settled conviction that one more such conquest would prove too much for him. We never saw any of these sea-termagants alive and in action, and must therefore refer the reader for full particulars to M. Lacépède, who had that advantage; but, to judge from sundry recently dead specimens, with fins down, tail at rest, and one eye only to be seen at a time, as the hammer-head rested on the pavement, he was quite ill-looking enough to justify a full belief in all that biographers have recorded against him.

These are the only three sharks of which the ancients have left us any clearly discriminative account, though they were doubtless acquainted with many other species as well, which frequent southern seas. It must have been one of this terrible tribe, and probably the white shark, to which Oppian refers in the latter part of the fifth Halieutic.

'The gashed and gory carcase, stretched at full length (a ghastly spectacle), is even yet an object of recoil and superstitious dread to the assembled crowd. A vague fear of his vengeance keeps the most curious of the captors awhile aloof; at length some venture to approach; one man looks into the gigantic jaws, and points out to his comrades a triple tier of polished and sharp teeth; another wonders at the width of back; a third admires the herculean mould of the lately terrible tail; a landsman, overawed, beholding the unsightly fish from a distance, exclaims, 'May the earth, which I now feel under me, and which has hitherto supplied my daily wants, receive, when I yield it, my latest breath, from her bosom! Preserve me, O Jupiter, from such perils as *this*, and be pleased to accept all my offerings to thee on dry land. May no thin plank ever interpose an uncertain protection beween me and the boisterous deep. Preserve me, O Neptune, from the terrors of the rising storm; and may I not, as the surge dashes over the deck, be whirled amidst the de-

stroyers of the deep; 'twere punishment enough for a mortal to be tossed about unsepulchred on the waves, but to become the pasture of a fish, and to fill the foul maw of such a ravenous monster as I now behold, would add tenfold horror to such a lot!' *

We participate entirely with this landsman in his hearty detestation of sharks, remembering well the mixed awe and interest inspired in everybody's mind by the view of a tope, albeit a small one for the species, captured after a furious resistance off the thunny-fishery of Palermo in the night, and brought in next morning by the sailors, at the market hour. Dozens of colossal thunnies, alalongas, pelamyds, and sword-fish, lay that morning scarcely noticed: the object of general attraction was the dread canesca, whose mangled corse, stretched by itself in the middle of the *place*, was surrounded by an excited and admiring throng, all loud in their exclamations and inquiries. The men who had secured the fish, perfectly satisfied with the results of the night's toil, smoked their pipes complacently, and gave the particulars of the capture to those who were eagerly pressing round to hear the exciting tale. Women, of course, —when were they, of the lower class, ever absent from any spectacle of horror?—mingled largely in the crowd; some with an infant in arms, others clutching their children by the hand, but all pointing out the fish to their

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* There was no museum at Padua in Oppian's day, or he would, after such a recital as the above, no doubt have introduced his readers to the shark chamber of this institution; a long, lofty saloon, exclusively appropriated to the reception of the different species which infest the Mediterranean. The visitor's first sensations on entering this Salle des Requins are not comfortable: a whole troop of this shrewd, fierce beasts, well stuffed and admirably preserved, are suspended by invisible wires from the ceiling, and appear alive—each hungry claimant apparently eyeing the intruder's person for a moment 'in grim repose,' ere he makes a dash, to 'swallow him up quick.'

equally noisy neighbours, and with many fierce gesticulations screamed out together, 'bruto!' 'scelerato!' 'Nerone dei pesci!' with other conventional names of abuse for a shark in Sicily; everybody was exclaiming, everybody exulting over his destruction. 'Eccolo Beppo; we have him, you see at last,' said one of the crew to a nearing boatswain, just come into the market. 'Buon giorno a lei! I make you my bow, sir,' said the other, gravely doffing his red worsted cap to the fish; 'we are all happy to see you on shore, signor; after this, perhaps, you will not invade la camera della morte again, and make a way for the thunny to slip through our fingers—eh? No, my lads, now we really have him, and you may mend your nets with something like a sense of security.' 'Per Bacco and St. Anthony! will you tell me, sir, where you have put the flannel drawers you took from my feluca, as they were drying on Sunday last, five minutes after Giuseppe's legs were out of them?' 'Cane maledetto! (accursed hound!) where's my brother's hand you snapped off, as he was washing it over the side of his boat, not a week ago?' 'Caro lei! did you now chance to swallow Padre Giacomo's poodle, which disappeared so suddenly the day before yesterday, as he was swimming to shore with his master's stick?' 'Risponde! risponde!' said twenty eager voices at once. 'Gentlemen,' said the master boatman and proprietor of the canesca, 'we shall get more *out* of him by looking *into* him, than by asking such questions as these; here, my lads,' addressing two of his men, 'wash his head and gills well, and show that gentleman—ourself—that he is not so small a canesca as he is pleased to imagine.'

The clean water soon brought out the features, as the blood and ooze were removed; and though the collapsed eyeballs, unsupported as in life, no longer shot menacing glances from their cartilaginous pivots, but fell back

opaque and dimmed into the sockets, an expression anything but amiable was still exhibited in their barred pupils of Minerva grey. The whole forehead was bathed with that phosphorescent mucus or jelly which gives this fish its luminous and spectral appearance, when seen in the dusk, and adds new terrors to the apparition. The aspect of the face was malign enough; and we thought that anything more ill-omened than a shark *λαμίας ἐυσμορφότερος*, even with his jaws shut, it would be difficult to find; but when the den of his mouth was forced open, and we ventured to peep in, and saw there three rows of sharp and pointed teeth, which alive he might with one effort of volition have brought to bear all at once upon the largest prey, and have made him spout blood at every pore, it became apparent that a fish, even like this of only eight or nine feet long, with such a jaw to tear, such a trunk to smash, and such a tail to stun, must have been capable of destroying almost any creature he might encounter; and we entered readily into the feelings of delight and triumph expressed by all the fishermen at the capture of so thoroughly a 'mauvais sujet.' Besides the jeopardy in which he places life, the mischief a single shark will occasion to the thunny and cod fisheries is incalculable; two or three of these marauders suffice to interrupt, and sometimes effectually to disconcert all the operations of the poor fishermen. Three or four blue sharks too have been known, during the pilchard season, to hover about the tackle, clear the long lines of every hook, by biting them off above the bait, break through the newly-shot nets, or to even swallow at a gulp the distended meshwork and its draught.

Nor is this all, nor yet the worst mischief recorded of sharks: fond as they are of fish, they greatly prefer flesh, and, unfortunately for man, his flesh before that of beast or bird. Acutely discriminative, too, in bad taste, their partiality is decidedly for an Asiatic rather

than a European; for a dark and unctuous, rather than clear and fair skin;* on this account, in a mixed group of bathers, the blacks are always the selected victims of a first attack;† but though negro-flesh be sharks' venison, to get at human flesh of any description, they will make extraordinary efforts—bound for this purpose out of the sea like tigers from a jungle, right athwart a steam vessel in full course, to pick off either a dead Negro dangling from the bowsprit, or some unwary sailor occupied in the rigging;‡ sometimes he will leap into a high fishing-boat, to the consternation of the crew, and grapple with the men at their oars; or, when hard pressed and hungry, even spring ashore and attack man on his own element.

A famished shark will snap up everything, even to a bit of his own body; and individuals have been known to pursue with such greediness a part of their own jaw, torn off by a hook, as not to be scared from their purpose even by the discharge of cannon! But though he may swallow all, yet there are some morsels even a shark

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* This is to be attributed, no doubt, to the 'odora canum vis,' which enables these dog-fish to sniff carrion, it is said, to the distance of six leagues, and no doubt to smell out a Negro further than a white.

† This being well known in the colonies, unfair advantage used to be taken of it by the whites, who, when they bathed in sharky localities, would surround themselves with a body-guard of Negroes as perquisites to these anthropophagizers not to molest them during their dip: 'à la honte de l'humanité,' writes Buffon, 'les blancs ont pu oublier les lois sacrées de la nature, au point de ne descendre dans les eaux de la mer qu'en plaçant autour d'eux de malheureux Nègres, les victimes de leur cruauté.'

‡ Among the atrocities practised on board slave-ships, one was, according to Commerson, the suspending a dead Negro from the bowsprit, in order to watch the efforts of the sharks to reach him; and this they would sometimes effect at a height of more than twenty feet above the level of the sea.

cannot stomach; witness the following lively anecdote, from the 'Edinburgh Observer':—

Looking over the bulwarks of the schooner (writes a correspondent to this Journal), I saw one of these watchful monsters winding lazily backwards and forwards like a long meteor; sometimes rising till his nose disturbed the surface, and a gushing sound like a deep breath rose through the breakers; at others, resting motionless on the water, as if listening to our voices, and thirsting for our blood. As we were watching the motions of this monster, Bruce (a little lively Negro and my cook) suggested the possibility of destroying it. This was briefly to heat a fire-brick in the stove, wrap it up hastily in some old greasy cloths as a sort of disguise, and then to heave it overboard. This was the work of a few minutes, and the effect was triumphant. The monster followed after the hissing prey; we saw it dart at the brick like a flash of lightning, and gorge it instanter. The shark rose to the surface almost immediately, and his uneasy motions soon betrayed the success of the manœuvre: his agonies became terrible, the waters appeared as if disturbed by a violent squall, and the spray was driven over the taffrail where we stood, while the gleaming body of the fish repeatedly burst through the dark waves, as if writhing with fierce and terrible convulsions. Sometimes also we thought we heard a shrill, bellowing cry, as if indicative of anguish and rage, rising through the gurgling waters. His fury, however, was soon exhausted; in a short time the sounds broke away into distance, and the agitation of the sea subsided; the shark had given himself up to the tides, as unable to struggle against the approach of death, and they were carrying his body unresistingly to the beach.

Fatal as the white shark is to the unarmed, those who carry weapons of offence very frequently cope with and master him; even women, undaunted by their teeth, have been known to stab, à la Corday, and destroy them in their bath. The following recital is abridged from the 'Oriental Herald':—'One day a little boy, about eight years old, happened to be washed from a catamaran which was managed by his father, who was thus early initiating him into the hardships of the mode of life which he intended him to pursue; and before he could

be rescued from the turbulent waters, a shark drew him under, and he was seen no more. The father lost not a moment, but calmly rose, and placing between his teeth a large knife which he carried sheathed in his summer-band, plunged beneath the lashing waves. He disappeared for some time, but after awhile was occasionally seen to rise, and then dive under the billows, as if actually engaged with his formidable foe. After awhile the white foam was visibly tinged with blood, which was viewed with a sensation of horror by those who could only surmise what was going on under the water. The man was again seen to rise and disappear, so that the work of death was evidently not yet complete; after some further time had elapsed, to the astonishment of all who were assembled on the beach (for by this time a considerable crowd had collected), the body of a huge shark was seen for a few moments above the whiting spray which it completely crimsoned, and then disappeared; an instant after, the man rose above the surf and made for the shore. He seemed nearly exhausted, but had not a single mark upon his body, which bore no evidence whatever of the perilous conflict in which he had been so recently engaged. He had scarcely landed, when an immense shark was cast upon the beach by the billows. It was quite dead, and was immediately dragged by the assembled natives beyond the reach of the surf.' As soon as the shark was drawn to a place of security, it was opened, when the head and limbs of the boy were taken from his stomach. The body was completely dismembered, and the head severed from it, but none of the parts were mutilated.

A poet is born a poet, and a shark is born a shark; in infancy a malignant, a sea-devil from the egg. When but a few weeks old, and a few inches in length, a Lilliputian squalus exhibits a pugnacity almost without pa-

rallel for his age; attacking fish two or three times larger than himself; or if caught, and placed for observation upon a board, resenting handling to the very utmost of his powers, and striking with the tail a finger placed on any part of the body where it can be reached. But though always hostile to man, and generally so to each other, love for a season subjugates even these savage dispositions, and makes them objects of reciprocal regard.

M. Lacépède, who seems to have entered intimately into the private feelings of sharks, speaks thus of their amours:—'Radoucis maintenant et cédant à des affections bien différentes d'un sentiment destructeur, ils mêlent sans crainte leurs armes meurtrières, rapprochent leurs gueules énormes et leurs queues terribles, et, bien loin de se donner la mort, s'exposeront à la recevoir plutôt que de se séparer; et ne cessent de défendre avec fureur l'objet de leur vives jouissances.' But this devotedness to their females does not last long; like the heroes of the Iliad, when they have torn each other to pieces for a mistress, and passed the short honeymoon, so characteristically described above, the tie is broken, and they become perfect 'Bluebeards in their conduct:' 'Rendu de nouveau à ses affreux appétits, moins susceptibles encore de tendresse que le tigre le plus féroce; ne connaissant ni femelle, ni famille, ni semblable; redevenu le dépopulateur des mers, et véritable image de la tyrannie, il ne vit plus que pour combattre, mettre à mort, et anéantir.' Members of the same party will even devour one another; and near the Isle of Cocos, where the sea is much infested with them, if one becomes hooked the others follow and tear him to pieces, as he is dragged along by the ship's cable. In spite of their ordinary fierceness, however, Plutarch bears testimony to the tenderness of sharks for their offspring. He says: 'In paternal fondness, in suavity and amiability of disposition

to offspring, the shark is not surpassed by any living creature. The female brings forth young, not perfect, but enclosed each in a pouch,* and watches over these till the brood is excluded, with the anxiety as it were of a second birth. After this both parents vie with each other in procuring food, and teaching their offspring to frolic and swim; and should danger threaten the defenceless little ones, they find in the open mouth of their affectionate progenitors a sure asylum;' 'from which,' says Oppian, who relates the same story with variations, 'they issue forth when the alarm is over and the waters are again safe.'

The following extremely interesting recital, for which we are indebted to our kind friend Admiral Smyth, establishes the fact, and tends also to prove how extensive and accurate a knowledge the ancients had of the natural history of fish. 'The vast Mahé Bank, the heads of which form the Seychelle Isles, in the Indian Ocean, is surprisingly infested with sharks,—the blue, the white, the tiger, the hammer-headed, and other varieties of that voracious tribe. In January, 1805, an enormous female monster was taken in Mahé Bay, while cruising round our ship (the Cornwallis), in company with others of her kind, and surrounded by a numerous progeny. The weather was superb, the water clear as crystal, and the vessel seemed to sleep at her anchors, so that we saw every object in the best possible manner. This unwieldy fish was actually caught with a small hook, which had been baited for rock-cod; and it is surprising that her attempts to escape should not have disengaged her, except perhaps that the peculiarity of her situation in a measure prevented a full exercise of strength. On the first percep-

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* In the stomach of the blue shark young ones are often found alive; but the prison is an unsafe one, especially in coming out of it,—'facilis descensus Averni,' etc.

tion of danger, and while she was being gently drawn alongside, all the young ones entered her mouth, to seek safety. With some difficulty, and much dexterity, she was secured and slung; but such was the weight of the quarry, that it required the fore and mainyard tackles to hoist her on board. After giving sundry violent flaps on the deck, she was overpowered, though still exhibiting that astonishing tenacity of life common to cold-blooded creatures. But now came the proof that what we had seen was no 'deceptio visus.' On a large gash being made in the fore part of the belly, we saw no fewer than thirty-eight young sharks tumble out of the orifice alive. They were each nearly two feet in length, tinted with mackerel colours, and their mouths admitted a man's hand with ease.'

But notwithstanding these short paroxysms of parental tenderness, taken as a class, it may be safely asserted that nothing in nature is more savage than the whole dog-fish tribe, the only difficulty being to determine precisely to which of the several species the bad pre-eminence at best belongs; whether to the white, the blue, or basking shark, the canesca, the zygæna, the rough-hound or bounce, etc., for they are all red republicans of the deep; strife their element, blood their caudle-cup, cruelty their pastime: so that the poor hunted hare's dying words in the jaws of a glaucus are appropriate as they are touching.* Even the soft sex, which amongst most creatures deserves this winning epithet, is in the squalidæ so far from being a recommendation, that the females are in fact more ferocious than the males. A Messalina sharkess has been known to dash into a crowd of un-

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* Trinacria quondam currentem in littoris ora
Ante canes leporem Cæruleus rapit,
At lepus: in me omnis terræ, pelagique rapina est.
Forsitan et cœli, si canis astra tenet.—*Auson.*

happy bathers, tearing and butchering one after another, nor leave the spot, though wearied and gorged, whilst there remained room in her inside to pouch another victim.

Et lassata viris, nondum satiata, recessit.

Well, indeed, do these 'fell, unhappie, and shrewd monsters,' as Pliny calls them, deserve the ill names bestowed by man:—Lamia, the fury, witch, or hobgoblin; anthropophagus, or man-eater; and requin, so called in anticipation of the requiems* which may certainly be offered up by friends for the soul of any one whose body comes in the way of a shark. In attacking the whale, a favourite pastime with several sharks of dimension, the cercharias requires and exhibits all his metal: 'tantôt la baleine sort sa queue, qui semble être un vaisseau sur lequel le soleil se réfléchit comme sur la glace d'un miroir; bientôt elle la laisse reployer avec fureur sur son ennemi, bat l'onde avec violence, et la fait élever en gros bouillons. La baleine est alors toute en furie; elle le manifeste tant par la manière dont elle flotte et s'agite, que par un mugissement rauque qu'elle fait entendre jusqu'à milieu de la plage.'†

The white shark is one of the largest of the tribe, weighing often as much as a thousand pounds, and stretching from twenty-five to thirty feet; there is however another, the S. maximus, which when full sized generally exceeds these dimensions, reaching a measurement of not less than forty feet: one of the former, captured off Marseilles, was found to contain an undigested warrior, cased in his mail, 'integer et cadavere toto.'

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* Lacépède derives this word very fancifully from an ancient Gothic root *rick*, 'lequel,' says he, 'signifie fort, puissant, et dont on a formé depuis le mot *riche*, parce qu'à mesure que la société s'est dépravée, nos ancêtres se sont aperçus que les richesses et force ou puissance devenaient malheureusement des synonymes.'

† Mém. Phil. Hist. sur l'Amérique, par Don Ulloa.

Another, from the same site (*vide* Brunnich), a whole man and two thunnies yet in their skins; another from the mouth of the Surinam river, a woman minus her head; another, caught off the isle of St. Margaret's, a whole horse (Müller); another, a baby of which she was delivered, by Spallanzani; whilst Rondolet gives the particulars of a man who went down in company with his dog into the stomach of a dead shark; the one for curiosity, the other to prowl about for offal. Some squali, cited by Cetti in his 'Pesci di Sardegna,' weighed from three to four thousand pounds, having ample stowage for eight or even ten full-sized thunnies; from these and similar statements, it seems certain that large sharks have ample accommodation for a single man, whence it has been inferred, rather hastily perhaps, that it must have been a squalus, and not a whale, which swallowed Jonah. Criticizing this conjecture, a distinguished French naturalist makes the following pithy and rather caustic remark: 'Il est sans doute possible qu'un requin eût fait sa proie d'un prophète; mais les livres saints ajoutent que Jonas sortit de ce gouffre, vivant, au bout de trois jours; et cela n'est plus dans l'ordre ordinaire. Les ouvrages d'histoire naturelle peuvent bien contenir des merveilles, puisque la nature en est remplie; mais on doit y renoncer à chercher l'explication de miracles.' That he was not swallowed by a whale is certain, for whales have very small gullets, and are not anthropophagously disposed; their food consists principally of small creatures only a few inches long, and not thicker than the barrel of a common-sized quill.*

The origin of this mistake, perpetuated by sculptors and painters, proceeds from a misconception of the He-

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* Specimens of the whale's food were exhibited (July, 1852) at the scientific meeting in Ipswich, by one of the coast-guard, an intelligent and accurate observer.

brew word 'tannanim,' translated 'whale,' but evidently designating, as its Latin equivalent 'cete,' any heavy fish; size, not species, determining either appellation.*

Cruel as all squali undoubtedly are, reasons perhaps might be suggested, if not wholly exculpatory of their conduct, sufficiently so at least to obtain for them an acquittal before any French or Italian court of judicature. The French verdict would be, as usual, 'meurtre, avec circonstances atténuantes.' An Italian jury would at once pronounce the criminal 'arrabbiato'—in a passion; and holding this sufficient excuse, would summarily dismiss the case. Such lenient judgments might be based on the grounds of their having teeth unusually numerous, efficient, and long, or on temperament; but sharks possess also enormous abdominal viscera; full one-third of the body is occupied by spleen or liver:† the bile and other digestive juices thus secreted from such an immense apparatus, and poured continually into the stomach, must stimulate appetite prodigiously, and what hungry animal was ever tender-hearted? We read in the 'Anabasis,' that the Greeks would not treat with the Persians about a truce till after dinner; and every one knows that to be the time most propitious to charity and good neighbourhood; a hungry man is ever a churl, and 'ventre affamé

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* That great fish generally were termed 'cete,' is clear from the name 'cetarius' given to the trader who dealt in them, and who sold turbot, and not whales. The distinction implied by this appellation appears to have provoked great jealousy among retailers of *pisciculi*, or 'little fish,' and led them to annoy both the cetarii and their customers. Aristophanes represents a sprat-seller, who, in the genuine spirit of a French Socialist, seeing a gentleman buying sturgeon,

'Bawls from his booth in accents fierce and rude,
There goes a tyrant even to his food.'—*Athenæus.*

† The size of the liver in a middle-sized shark may be inferred from its yielding two tons and a half of oil.

n'a point d'oreilles.' Now a shark's appetite can never be appeased; for, in addition to this bilious diathesis, he is not a careful masticator, but hastily bolting his food, produces thereby not only the moroseness of indigestion, but a whole host of *tæniæ*,* which goad as well as irritate the intestine to that degree, that the poor squalus is sometimes quite beside himself from the torment, and rushes, like a blind Polyphemus, through the waves in search of anything to cram down his maw, that may allay such urgent distress; he does not seek to be cruel, but he is cruelly famished, and must satisfy, not only his own ravenous appetite, but the constant demands of these internal parasites, either with dead or living animals; and therefore it is that, sped as from a catapult, he pounces on a quarry, and gorges sometimes so much as to protrude a large portion of the intestine, which, after one of these crapulous repasts, may not unfrequently be seen trailing several feet from the body.

Great as are the dimensions of many existing squali, there can be no doubt that some of the antediluvian period greatly exceeded in size any species at present known. We are indebted to M. Lacépède for this discovery, and the ingenious procedure by which he arrived at it deserves notice. M. Lacépède was one of the first naturalists who applied the since well understood and more fully developed principle of 'ex pede Herculem' to objects of natural history. Having received from Dax, in the Pyrenees, a shark's tooth† of the very unusual size of

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* These tænias, when not satisfied with what they find in the intestines, bore their way through, and terebrate at last into the abdominal cavity.

† Time was when these sharks' teeth were a gainful trade, and as much faith placed in them as in the minute osteology of saints; they were supposed to keep the wearer of them from mishaps, to cure him of a fever without physic, and break down a stone in his bladder without help of surgeon. Malta abounds in these teeth.

four inches and a half in the enamel, or the part visible above the socket, he was prompted to discover, if possible, the size of its original possessor; for this purpose he measured first the teeth, and next the bodies of all the squali accessible to him in the museums of Paris, and found in every case, that the relative proportion they bore to each other was as one to two hundred; and applying this general scale to the particular tooth from Dax, M. Lacépède found that he held the relic of a creature that in the days of the flesh must have been full seventy feet long. The proportions between the body and the head being also definite, it was as readily made clear that a squalus stretching to this length had jaws with a bow above thirteen feet, and a mouth capable of gaping more than twenty-six feet round. In comparison with such a squalus, those chronicled by Rondolet requiring two horses to drag them, and some mentioned by other authors, weighing from three to four thousand pounds, dwindle into mere minnows and gudgeons.*

It is an interesting fact in the history of sharks—and one by no means without precedent in our own—that violent passions, parasites, and indigestions, do not seem to ruffle the equable current of the blood, their pulse continuing regular, and averaging only sixty beats in a minute. As with us a good digestion (the common accompaniment of a quiet pulse) may be and often is connected with a bad disposition; who knows but that Heliogabalus and Nero, those human types and representatives of the genus shark in so many other particu-

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which from the shape, and because St. Paul was supposed to have changed all the great serpents of that island into stone, are called serpents' tongues, 'glossopetres.'

* Lacépède gives the relative proportions between the largest fossil, and some existing sharks, as 543 : 27; which are much greater in the smaller species.

lars, may have resembled them in this also, and in the midst of their orgies and atrocities have enjoyed a calm circulation.

Sharks are sometimes eaten, but more out of bravado and revenge than because they afford a desirable food. Athenæus indeed records that the Greeks were squalophagi, but then they would eat anything. Archestratus, *the* bon-vivant of his book, will not allow men to object to sharks, merely because the shark sometimes eats men; and if this were all, we might readily agree with him, but Galen speaks disparagingly of sharks' flesh, from its tendency to produce melancholy! We do not know whether the Latins liked them. Among modern nations, the Chinese make a shark-chonda, which has a great name; the Italians and Sicilians cook not only the belly of the old fish but fœtal sharks (which are not much bigger than gudgeons) whenever they can procure a dish. In the still less dainty Hebrides, the 'squalus vulgaris' is consumed entire; and though in England they are not relished, in Norway and Iceland the inhabitants make indiscriminate use of every species captured, hanging up the carcases for a whole year like hams, that the flesh may become mellow. Though no part of the shark is really wholesome, one part, the liver (which is very valuable in a commercial point of view, from the abundance of oil squeezed from it), is highly prejudicial for food, as we learn, on the evidence of the following case of an obscure French cobbler, recorded by an eminent French physician (Sauvages).

Sieur Gervais, his wife and two children, supped upon a piece of shark's liver; in less than half an hour all were seized with invincible drowsiness, and threw themselves on a straw mattress; nor did they arouse to consciousness till the third day. At the end of this long lethargy their faces were inflamed and red, with an insupportable itching of the whole body; complete desquamation of the

cuticle followed, and when this flaying process was concluded, all the patients slowly recovered.*

The Lamprey.

> Quæque, per Illyricum, per stagna binominis Istri,
> Spumarum indiciis caperis, Mustela, natantum,
> In nostrum subvecta fretum, ne lata Moselæ
> Flumina tam celebri defraudarentur alumno.—*Auson.*

This excellent and widely-distributed fish, a true citizen of the world, and found, as Cuvier informs us, in almost every clime, inhabiting the Japanese Sea, the salt waters which skirt the shores of Southern America, the Northern Ocean, and most of its great tributary streams, abounding, and particularly good in the Mediterranean, has descended to us from antiquity with dubious names, and, despite its merits, without one laudatory comment from the stylus of Apicius! The actual Greek and Latin names for lamprey are palpable forgeries, and though no doubt this, like other prime fish at Rome, was served up as the king of cooks enjoined, either in Alexandrian gravy—jus Alexandrinum, or 'aux fines herbes,' *διὰ βοτανῶν*, still there is no name in his ichthyological bill of fare applicable to the present species. Nothing can better show the mistakes and blunders into which etymology, unguided by sound discretion, is prone to run, than the resolve to trace all fish-names to a Greek and Latin source. The real derivation of the Italian word 'lampetra' (through lamproie, lampryon, lampetron) is our own word lamprey; and this, again, is obviously itself derived from *lang*, long, and *prey*, *prick*,

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* It was probably from eating the liver, thus ascertained to be deleterious, that the crew of the 'Reward' suffered in 1802 in her voyage from Jamaica, when 'many lives were lost, in consequence, as was said, of partaking of a shark.'

or *pride*, the trivial name for the small river lamprey. When, however, our Anglo-Saxon appellative had, in passing into Italy, come to assume a Latin form, the mistake soon crept in that it was *bond fide* Latin, and etymologists accordingly set themselves to work to find out what it meant. After a time, it was discovered by the learned, and adopted by the simple, that lampetra was derived 'a lambendo petras'—from sucking stones, a well-known propensity of the lampridæ. This Latin blunder, duly established and generally adopted, led, at no very distant period, to a second: an ingenious ichthyologist, we believe somewhere about Queen Anne's day, having coined and issued for the lamprey the *Greek* designation 'petromyzon,' being the plain *translation of lampetra*, this was as speedily adopted as the last, and the popular, but as we see erroneous belief, was, and may-hap still is, that Lampetra occurs in Pliny, and that Petromyzon may be found in Aristotle. With a variety of *classical* misnomers which have been taken up by modern authors from ancient sources, evidently without sufficient consideration, it is not our purpose to intermeddle. There are, however, two names,—a Greek one occurring in Oppian, and a Latin one, employed both by Pliny and Ausonius, which seem to be really the ancient representatives of the species now under review. That Pliny's and Ausonius's mustela, or weasel, is to be interpreted of the lamprey, there seems to be little doubt; for, *imprimis*, that fish is exactly portrayed by Ausonius under this name,—

> Qui te naturæ pinxit color, atra superne
> Puncta notant tergum, quæ lutea circuit iris,
> Lubrica cæruleus perducit tergora fucus
> Corporis ad medium farsim pinguesci, at illinc
> Usque sub extremam squalet cutis arida caudam.

Secondly, Pliny, in describing the mustela, mentions that it is 'assuetus petris,' and of two kinds, differing

chiefly in size; that one inhabits fresh, the other salt water; which passage obviously has reference to the pride or river lamprey, and to the proper or sea lamprey. Thirdly, the name itself strongly countenances this view, for what fish is so like a weasel, not only as to colour and markings, but also in his habits and proceedings, as the lamprey? When once fastened to a rock, there he sticks, sucking away with pertinacity, as though he would prove the fallacy of the old proverb, and succeed in extracting blood even out of a stone. Under the *Greek* name 'echeneis,'* stay-ship, Oppian has given a correct account of the lamprey:—

> Slender his shape, his length a cubit ends,
> No beauteous spot the gloomy race commends:
> An eel-like clinging kind, of dusky looks,
> His jaws display tenacious rows of hooks;
> The sucking fish beneath, with secret chains
> Within his teeth, the sailing ship detains.†

The boneless eel, ἔγχελυς ἀπύρηνος of Archestratus, was, no doubt, the lamprey. Strabo's 'Libyan leeches, with perforated bronchiæ, which ascended rivers,' were also, no doubt, lampreys; though the venial license to be conceded to a poet, swells into open licentiousness in a geographer, when he stretches the original measurement of four feet to twelve. Elsewhere we find the number of feet, like Falstaff's men in buckram, run on increasing, till one Statius Libonius is not ashamed to assert, nor one Pliny to quote, the following:—'Within Ganges, a river of India, there be fishy snouted and tailed dolphins, fifteen cubits long, called platanistæ, and Statius Libonius reporteth as strange a thing be-

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* The Latin name for this fish is 'remora' (from *remoror*, I delay), and it was considered no good augury to encounter one in bathing, during a love or a law-suit, or any other business that required despatch.

† Opp. trans. by J. Jones.

sides—namely, that in the said river there be certain worms or serpents with two fins of a side, sixty cubits long, of colour blue, which be so strong that when the elephants come into the river for drink, they catch fast hold with their teeth, by their trunks or muzzles, and, maugre their hearts, force them down under the water, of such force and power they be.' These were no doubt lampreys, seen through the microscope of a warm imagination, and accordingly highly magnified. Aldrovandi however, who also believes them to be lampreys, swallows the story as he finds it, cubits and all, and seeks to justify Libonius's Gulliverism and Pliny's gullibility to the reader, by gravely telling him that all things attain to grand dimensions in India: 'in India omnia grandiora sunt.'

Repudiating of course these giant impersonations of the lamprey as altogether fabulous, our little cyclostome presents himself to notice, with quite a sufficiency of recommendations to dispense with the aid of any orientalisms to set him off. No animal in creation has so singular and sensitive a mouth, serving at once as a prehensile instrument to secure, and an organ for the trituration of food: the lamprey, in a sense peculiar to himself, lives from hand to mouth, since these are both one. The oral apparatus consists of a loose extensile lip, which the fish can project in a circular manner,—hence his name of 'cyclostome,' or round-mouth,—and apply, like a boy's leathern sucker, to wood, stone, or any other object he happens to have a design upon. Within the circle of this extensile lip, lies a nimble little rasping tongue, stuck all over with points, and always on the wag; and as this sharp file works up and down on the surface of whatever may be covered by the flattened mouth, the result of its operations soon becomes apparent, especially when, as it often happens, the scalp of an unfortunate fish is the subject of experiment. In

this case, it matters not how large or how fierce the victim may be, no effort can extricate the luckless head 'in Coventry' under that fatal disc; *στόμα νέρθεν ἐρύκει*: quicker than any eating ulcer the tongue works its way through the integuments; the patient may plunge and writhe, but the operation of trephine goes on, and soon, with all the ease of a cheesemonger driving his scoop into the rind of a Cheshire or Stilton, does the lamprey push his tongue through the bony plates of the skull, and draw it back, with a sample of brains adhering. This tiny instrument of mischief furnishes a good emblem of the tongue of the wicked, as described in Holy Writ; 'a little member,' yet 'a keen sword,' and 'boasting great things.' Amongst the most remarkable of its boasts, is that of being able, in conjunction with the lips, suddenly to arrest vessels in their course, and render wind and tide of no avail to stir them! St. James has compared the helm of a vessel to the human tongue; as that guides or misguides the man, so this guides or misguides the ship, which it 'turneth about at will;' but the lamprey's tongue vitiates the metaphor by controlling this last the moment it has seized the rudder; that moment, it seems, the control of the helm ceases, and the course of the vessel is suspended! 'Who,' asks Oppian, 'would have believed such a thing as this, unless it had been a matter of common notoriety and experience?' The truth of this assertion being taken for granted, he next places himself, like a real poet, on an imaginary quarter-deck, and begins to relate, as an eye-witness, how the vessel, rolling on impetuously before a strong current and a steady breeze, stops suddenly in full canvas, to the consternation of the crew; how the wind now roars in vain from behind, and the strong current runs by under the motionless keel; how the beams call to the rafters, and the rafters to the bowsprit, to go ahead—and all to no purpose; how sails, ribs, and cordage, flutter, groan, and crack, in the pass-

ing blast; how the strained planks creak and start: how the mast sways to and fro, and finally snaps and goes overboard; and how the passive hulk moves no more than if it lay in dock:

> The seamen run confused, no labour spared,
> Let fly the sheets, and hoist the topmast yard;
> The master bids them give her all the sails,
> To court the winds, and catch the coming gales:
> But though the canvas bellies with the blast,
> And boist'rous winds bend down the cracking mast.
> The bark stands firmly rooted on the sea,
> And all unmoved as tower or tow'ring tree.*

Pliny, with equal confidence, relates the following of the same fish:—

The current of the sea is great, its tides mighty, the winds puissant and forcible; and more than that, ores and sailes withal to help forward the rest are mighty and powerful, and *yet* there is one little sillie fish, Echeneis, that checketh, scorneth, and arresteth them all; let the winds blow as much as they will, rage the storms and tempests never so strong, even yet this little fish commandeth their fury, restraineth their puissance, and, maugre all their force, as great as it is, compelleth the ships to stand still! Why should our fleets and armadas at sea make such turrets on the walls and forecastles, when one little fish—(see the vanitie of man!)—is able to arrest and stay perforce our goodly and tall ships? Certes, *reported* it is, that in the navall battle before Actium, wherein Anthony and Cleopatra were defeated by Augustus, one of these fishes staid the admiral ship, wheron M. Anthony was; at what time as he made all the hast and means he could devise, with help of ores, to encourage his people from ship to ship, and could not prevail, until he was forced to abandon the the same admirall and goe into another gailey. Meanwhile the armada of Augustus Cæsar, seeing the disorder, charged with greater violence, and soon invested the fleet of Anthony. Of late days also, and within our remembrance, the like happened to the roiall ship of the Emperor Caius Caligula; at what time as he rowed back and made saile from Astura to Antium: and as

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* Opp. trans. by J. Jones.

soon as the vessel (a gallien it was furnished with five banks of ores to a side) was perceived alone in the fleet to stand still, presently a number of bold fellows leapt out of their ships into the sea, to search after the said galley, what the reason might be that it 'stirred not,' and found one of these fishes sticking fast to the vere helme; which being reported to C. Caligula, he fumed and sware as an emperor, taking a great indignation that so small a thing as this should hold her back perforce, and check the strength of all his warriors, notwithstanding there were no fewer than 400 lustie men in his galley, that laboured at the ore, all that ever they could do to the contrary. This fish presaged an unfortunate event, for no sooner was he arrived at Rome but some souldiours in a mutinie fell upon him and stabbed him to death.

That lampreys occasionally play the same pranks with modern vessels as they did with ancient galleys seems certain, if we would believe all that ichthyologists assert.

Rondolet informs us that a friend of his, 'eques fortissimus,' *i. e.* one who lied like a trooper, met with an adventure very like that of Caius Caligula. He was going to Rome in the suite of Cardinal Tournon, in a fine ship, which was scudding glibly before the wind, when she suddenly came to a stand-still, and after much wonderment and investigation as to the nature of the impediment, a lamprey was found fixed to the helm, which was removed not without difficulty,* when the vessel, freed from the encumbrance, proceeded swiftly on her course, and Rondolet invokes the whole crew to attest the veracity of this relation, and their cognizance of a fact which cannot be believed though it were entered in the log-book.

The lamprey is a fine fish for the short season when

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* This part of the recital is probably correct; no bull-dog, badger, or limpet being more adhesive than a lamprey: once fastened to an object, he will not suffer it to escape; Pennant cites an instance of a lamprey, which weighed eight pounds, adhering to a body of twelve pounds, so firmly as to raise it when he was himself raised into the air.

they proceed up the river to spawn; afterwards they remain lean and ill-favoured with the new brood till autumn, when all repair together to the sea; but neither then nor later is lamprey flesh so delicate in quality as early in the year, at which period accordingly Galen prescribes it to his patients.

The finest came from Sicily, and, in this respect, Taormini was to the court of Rome what Gloucester used to be to that of London; the best lampreys, but not the largest, were procured thence as 'presents to the reigning Caesar' or the high functionaries of state. It is not hence however to be inferred that Tiber lampreys were bad; the contrary seems the fact, but they were probably scarce; and greedy competitors, in Jovius' day, would, he tells us, give five, six, or seven pieces of the then gold currency apiece, and he mentions one instance where a hundred pieces were paid: thus the high price, while it establishes the excellence of the fish, also proves it scarce; and hence no doubt the necessity of 'scouring foreign creeks' to obtain it. The same Jovius, who was a bit of a cook as well as a naturalist, advises to drown lampreys in fine wine; and after letting them soak awhile, stuffing the mouth with nutmeg, and the fourteen flute-holes with as many cloves, to simmer over a very slow fire in a sauce of Cretan wine, oil, bread-crumbs, bruised hazel-nuts, and plenty of spice, and to serve hot. They are salted at Hamburg, and smoked at Dantzic; the liver, in great vogue as a delicacy, yields a beautiful permanent green pigment. The fat, besides gratifying the epicure's palate, was applied over the skin to prevent the spreading of the scars in small-pox. Much as this fish has been in general esteem, it has had its detractors, on which Lacépède makes the following sprightly remarks:—'Il est arrivé en cette occasion ce qui arrive presque toujours en pareille circonstance, pendant que les docteurs écrivèrent sur les bonnes ou mauvaises

qualités des lamproies, les amis de bonne chère et les médecins eux-mêmes admettaient ces poissons sur leurs tables et ne s'en trouvaient pas incommodés. On a attribué la mort de Henry I. d'Angleterre à un repas dans lequel il avait trop mangé de lamproies. Mais de quoi ne peut-on pas mourir lorsque l'on en fait excès? Et la puissance des rois ne tient pas toujours contre une indigestion.'

The fresh-water lamprey, or pride, is about half the size of the sea lamprey; it abounds in most of our rivers, and is a source of great profit to the fishermen, who export it to Hamburg, Dantzic, and other places, either for food or for live-bait. The Dutch prize it highly on account of its toughness and tenacity to life, and use large quantities in the cod and turbot fisheries. Yarrell states that they will give from two to five pounds a thousand; and so abundant are these fish in the Thames, that in one year four hundred thousand were thus disposed of; the minimum given by this author is one hundred thousand, the maximum eight hundred thousand.

CHAPTER XX.

SKATE.

Ἡ μόνη ἰχθὺς ἑοῦσα τὸ λευκὸν καὶ μελαν οἴδε.

The only fish that's cooked *au blanc*, and *noir*.*

TO connect objects in Natural History by any single point of resemblance, however characteristic—though it may be convenient for the sake of reference, and be adopted by systematic writers generally in their books—is often to take strange liberties with the book of Nature, and to bring into an unnatural and coerced apposition creatures the most dissimilar. A striking exemplification of this occurs in the grouping together by authors of the small family Petromyzons just mentioned, with the Rays, of which mention is now to be made. It must seem, on a *primâ facie* view, quite incredible to any one but an ichthyologist, that lampreys and skates should have anything more in common than gudgeons and whales, or minnows and tritons; and further inquiry would perhaps only tend to strengthen such a general impression: for while the lamprey is almost finless, a skate is nearly half fin; while the body of the lamprey is long and cylindrical, that of the skate, on the other hand, is a lozenge and flat; and whereas the first tribe have smooth backs, and carry no hostile weapons, the other, armed at every point, bristles *cap-à-queue* with swords, saws, and stilettoes. As to size, again, we might as well compare Lilliputians with Brobdignagians, as some species of the first with the larger kinds of the second; for the longest Petromyzons rarely reach three

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* Au beurre noir.

feet, or weigh above three pounds; but it requires several pairs of sinewy hands to drag full-grown specimens of the biggest rays to the steelyard, or to force them into the balance, when a counterpoise has often to be effected by a pile of cannon-balls, and the result registered, not in pounds, but in hundredweights. Lastly, lampreys, according to their biographers, are of retiring, cautious, and unsocial habits; while gregarious skate delight in society, and are impetuous and headlong in their passions. Why, then, are creatures thus essentially different in many obvious points of comparison, placed so near in ichthyological works as to be separated only by the thin partition of a page? Because, while common observers are content in skin-deep knowledge to look superficially, and to note merely palpable distinctions, the practised eye of a systematist penetrates deeper; he cuts through all integumentary impediments, clears away muscle, artery, vein and nerve, as mere encumbrances, and goes direct to the skeleton; there finds that lampreys and rays, unlike most fish, agree with each other in the common possession of a cartilaginous back, and considers this a sufficient ground for bringing them together. Thus has a single point of physiological resemblance, and that, too, by no means an essentially characteristic one—for cartilage is but the early stage of bone—been held a sufficient reason for upsetting various plain and more striking differences, which might have suggested to an unbiassed judgment the propriety of keeping creatures so unlike, apart. But being once united, the *irrupta copula* of scientific order has bound rays and lampreys so indissolubly together, that there is no likelihood now of a separation; and having travelled for the last century with a common passport, under the name of *Chondropterygians*, they will no doubt continue members of the same *un*happy family party to the latest posterity, swimming nose to nose in the same illustrated plate, and

catalogued in the order in which we now present them to the reader.*

The Rays, having for the most part, as the name imports, thick and rugose hides, may be considered the rhinoceroses of the deep. In spite however of this unpromising outside, they are reputed to possess, in common with certain men of unpolished exterior, many amiable internal qualities, by way of compensation. Thus M. Lacépède reports, amidst other commendatory passages, that their susceptibilities are lively and their attachments strong; that whatever may be the truth with regard to oysters, rays may certainly be 'crossed in love,' and that the whole family displays a warmth of affection beyond any of their briny associates. 'Seuls entre les poissons,' says he, 'ils ne sont pas étrangers, comme tous les autres habitans des eaux, aux charmes de la volupté partagée, et d'une sorte de tendresse, au moins légère et momentanée.'† From this however it may be deduced, even on M. Lacépède's own showing, that they are also fickle in their amours, and make but indifferent French husbands at best. But though divorces may be common, and the legitimate Mrs. Ray have too often to make way for some rival De Maintenon, to occupy her place *ad interim*, skates carry out their scheme of patriarchal life in a more amiable particular; showing

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* The connection between sharks and rays is much more natural; indeed, the analogies here are so many and striking, that, according to M. Lacépède, they constitute two closely allied divisions of the same family. As the outward shape of these fish is very unlike, it is singular to find the ancients perfectly acquainted with their natural nearness to each other; this is shown in their uniting the two names batis (Gr.) raia (Lat.) = ray, and rhinos (Gr.) squatina (Lat.) = dog-fish, in the person of that singular fish rhinobatis (Aristot.) = squato-raia (Pliny), which they conceived to be a cross between the two.

† Otho Helbigius announces that they have *τὰ καταμήνια*, 'comme les femmes et les femelles des singes,' and are good mothers.

themselves in the paternal relation excellent *pères de famille*; displaying a forethought and *storge* for the young posterity truly admirable, and almost as boundless as the element in which it works. This philoprogenitiveness of the parent outlasts the weak and helpless state of infancy, and exerts itself in training the adolescent fish in the art of providing for his own wants. Theirs then is a very peculiar *storge*: one of a patient, almost moral character; without partiality, and given without stint to all alike,

Chacun à son part, et tous l'ont tout entier.

Wrapt in domestic bliss, old and young lie together many fathoms deep, far out of sight, till, urged by the call of hunger, they quit these loved retreats, muster in full force, and start on a foray. Under the guidance of an unerring instinct,

Which forms the phalanx and which leads the way,

the impetuous cohort speeds forward as one fish; nor is there a moment's pause nor slacking speed till the object which set it in motion is discerned: as soon as a migratory horde of fish is seen scudding in advance, chase is given, and the army of skates dash at once upon the quarry, and carry it off to some ocean eyrie to feast unmolested.

The singular habit which many of the rays adopt, of hovering with outspread fins* and fixed eyes evidently on the look-out for game, and also of wheeling in exploratory circles through the watery expanse with the like view, added to the unfishlike practice of pouncing upon

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* Aristotle, mistaking these wide-spread appendages for parts of the body proper, asserts that rays have no fins, but move entirely by *bending the sides of the body*. After the lapse of many centuries, however, the case of Ray *v.* Aristotle being impartially tried, the decision of antiquity has been quashed, and the repossession of fins granted to the plaintiff.

prey, and afterwards of banqueting upon it without witnesses, present so many striking points of resemblance to the evolution of rapacious birds, that several of these fish have received names from different members of the Falcon family; names, not more appropriate from this mode of hunting and dealing with their victims when caught, than from the efficient and formidable weapons by which they secure them. These weapons, from very early times, rendered the possessors objects of public curiosity and interest. Few fish, indeed, as a group, are better prepared for aggression or self-defence than the rays, many of the larger kinds being armed from the tail to the very teeth: but there are some kinds that, since the days of Aristotle, have enjoyed 'throughout all the posterities' a reputation quite *sui generis*, for certain supposed poisonous instruments, which are commonly, like the sting in bees and scorpions, seated in or near the tail. The most renowned of these 'noli me tangere' rays is the sea-eagle. This colossal fish possesses an enormous pair of fins, which, stretching out from either side of the body, offer a striking resemblance to a pair of wide-spread wings; he possesses moreover a detached head, terminating in a porrect process, like a beak, and a large pair of piercing bright eyes: these are the fancied analogies which have procured him the honour of dividing his name with the king of birds.

The vast carcase of the sea-eagle often challenged our attention, when it lay extended on the lava flags of the Neapolitan market-place. Alive, in the water, it is said to be of all swimmers *facile princeps*, performing all natatory evolutions in a manner so graceful and stately as to defy competition. Gliding in slow majestic pomp through the waters, with the dignity of a tragedy queen, her marine majesty seems to have attracted particular attention along the Marseillais coast, where the more polite and educated class of observers conferred on this ray

the *sobriquet* of 'la glorieuse': 'Elle nage lentement, é comme en gravité; d'où en Languedoc a esté nommée *glorieuse*, é ainsi qu'un cheval vigoureux bien parsé, bien harnaché, marche bravement é nu contre ceux qui s'approchent; ainsi la glorieuse, nageant de telle sorte, pique de son éguillon les poissons nageans près elle;'* but there are many ways of looking at the same object, and fishermen are not celebrated for using courteous epithets; it is not therefore wonderful to find 'la glorieuse' stripped of all her glory in passing through such hands; regarding the shape and pose of the head and large salient eyes as indicative rather of a toad than a Dido or an eagle, these rude mariners have coined their name from that batrachian, and in the Marseilles market accordingly, offer not skate, but *crapaud de mer*, for dinner. Other common-place observers, attracted by the enormous length of a switch-tail, frequently twice as long as the body of the fish, and not finding such an appendage in queens, toads, or eagles, have degraded 'la glorieuse' into a water-rat. Others, again, looking only to the peculiar appearance of the lateral processes for swimming, which seem like, but are yet unlike both fins and wings, bearing a nearer resemblance to the leathery aeronautic apparatus of bats, have vespertilionized this skate into the Sea-bat.

So much concerning the various names of this ray; and now, touching the formidable weapon already alluded to, which renders the sea-eagle so dangerous of approach. It lies, as has been already said, at the base of the tail, just at its nethermost part. To protect the organ from irreverent handling, a sharp bony sword is placed sentinel, like the kirtle-knife by which a Janissary secures respect to his beard. This weapon is not only dangerous from its great length, but also from the rows

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* Rondolet.

of serrated teeth at each side ;* every tooth of which being in itself a small saw, and very sharp, readily enters the flesh on the slightest wag of the tail ; and once entered can only be drawn out again by making a torn and ragged opening. The worst and most dangerous wound, however, is when the elastic tail dashes the apparatus, saws and all, its whole length, half a foot or more, into an unfortunate fisherman's thigh (as has frequently happened, in spite of the ordinary precautions), dragging it out again to make a new lunge before the unhappy victim has had time to escape ; and so expert is the skate in this small-sword exercise, and so swiftly does stroke follow stroke, that persons who have seen it in operation report that, but for the spoutings of fresh blood, and the larger display of raw surface, they would have declared the weapon motionless all the time. No wound with which surgery is acquainted is more hazardous than this : the soft parts are cut, contused, torn, jagged, intermixed, and mammocked in every conceivable way ; and besides all the dangers of an ugly flesh-wound, there is peril too from the tearing of the fascias and tendons, and lest the periosteum of the bone should be scraped and exposed. The terrible sufferings inflicted by this atrocious caudine weapon—which is borne by four other colossal skates as well as by the sea-eagle—has caused it to be regarded with as much superstitious reverence by fishermen, as was the tail of his music-master, Chiron, by the youthful Achilles. Every lazzarone has some *sinistre* to tell of a brother, cousin, or comrade, who was either many months an inmate of the Seaman's Hospital before he could follow his craft again, or who was at the very time a cripple in that of the Incurables.

Upon this dart the sea-eagle depends as much for sup-

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* Certain wild American tribes use this instrument as a saw.

plies as the fowler does on his gun, or the huntsman on his boar-spear. Lying *perdu* in the sand, and, herself unseen, seeing everything that passes, the wily creature, on discovering a fish of size swimming within reach, suddenly protrudes the tail, which, uncurling like a spring lasso one instant, has coiled itself the next round the prey, and dragged it below, to impale on the fatal saw-sword. This either summarily despatches it at a blow, or if the victim be strong, a succession of stabs is dealt on the convulsed body with lightning rapidity and certain effect. Such being the potency of this terrible dart, we do not wonder that in early days men should have somewhat exaggerated the truth, that its wounds should have been described not only as painful and mischievous, but poisonous, and, like the prick of the rattlesnake's tooth, necessarily mortal. This was the weapon, according to ancient authorities, put by the enchantress Circe into the hands of her son Telegonus, wherewith he slew his father Ulysses; which, more deadly than the deadly wourali, was said to kill an animal by mere contact with the skin; and which, if it but scratched the bark of a tree, forthwith the tree perished. Nothing on sea or land could be conceived (said they) so pestiferous, immedicable, and fatal to all things endowed with life! This of course is pure fiction, yet to this day—such is the hereditary mischief caused by a bad name—it would be as easy to persuade a Neapolitan barcarole that a Vesuvian viper had no venom in its tooth, as that the sea-eagle had none in its tail. So strongly are all fishermen possessed of this idea, that did not the enactment exist, requiring these fish to be disarmed before importation to the market, every man of them would cautiously remove the dreaded instrument, partly by way of precaution, and partly to adorn his cabin with another trophy of a poisoned dart, wrenched from a powerful foe he had helped to capture. Besides the sea-eagle, there

are other skate of far greater dimensions, and equally formidable, distributed in different seas. A specimen of one exotic species captured off Barbadoes, required seven pair of bullocks to pull it on shore; another, the ray of Barrère, is said to reach twenty feet; and being nearly as broad as it is long, must, when it launches itself out of the deep, come down again, as reported, with a stunning sound. Some of these colossal rays are as much dreaded by the pearl-fishers of India as the white shark itself. Le Vaillant gives the following interesting account of three such marine monsters, which his ship encountered within six degrees of the line:—'Grand bruit parmi les matelôts; on a crié tout à coup, Voilà le diable, il faut l'avoir! Aussitôt tout s'est réveillé, tout a pris les armes, on ne voyait que piques, harpons, et mousquets. J'ai couru moi-même pour voir le diable, et j'ai vu un gros poisson qui ressemble à une raie, hors qu'il a deux cornes comme un taureau. Il a fait quelques caracoles, toujours accompagné d'un poisson blanc, qui de temps en temps va à la petite guerre et vient se remettre sous le diable; et entre ses deux cornes il porte un petit poisson gris dessus chacun, qu'on appelle le pilote du diable, parce qu'il le conduit et le pique quand il voit de poisson, et alors le diable part comme un trait. Je vous conte ce petit manége parce que je viens de le voir: nous étions à six degrès de la ligne. On eût dit que les deux videttes ne se plaisaient ainsi que pour veiller à la sûreté de l'animal, pour l'avertir des dangers qu'il courait, et diriger ses mouvemens par les leurs. S'approchait-il trop près du vaisseau, ils quittaient leur poste, et nageant avec vivacité devant lui, ils l'obligeaient de s'éloigner. S'élevait-il trop au-dessus de l'eau, ils passaient et repassaient sur son dos; jusqu'à ce qu'il se fut enfoncé davantage; si, au contraire, il s'enfonçait trop, alors ils disparaissaient et on cessait de les voir, parce que sans doute ils le touchaient en dessous, comme dans l'occasion précédente

ils l'avaient touché en dessus : aussi le voyait-on aussitôt remonter vers la surface de la mer, et les deux factionnaires reprenaient leur poste, chacun sur leur corne.'

The Narke.

Κερκίδες ἐμπεφύασι παρὰ πλευραῖς ἑκατέρθεν
ἀμφίδυμοι· τῶν εἴ τις ἐπιψαύσειε πελάσσας,
αὐτίκα οἱ μελέων σθένος ἔσβεσεν, ἐν δέ οἱ αἷμα
πήγνυται, οὔδ' ἔτι γυῖα φέρειν δύνατ', ἀλλά οἱ ἀλκὴ
ἦκα μαραινομένοιο παρίεται ἄφρονι Νάρκῃ.—*Opp.* lib. ii.

Besides those Sicarian skate of which mention has just been made, there is one of much smaller dimensions but of far more marvellous powers, which, long before Leyden phials were invented, or the principles of electricity understood, had pressed this redoubtable agent into its service, and was wont to give practical lessons in the science to all who did not object to the 'charge.' The peculiar powers of this fish are cursorily alluded to or commemorated at length by a whole host of ancient writers:

Quis non edomitam miræ Torpedinis artem
Audit et emeritas signatas nomine vires?

asks Claudian; Plato compares Socrates to a narke, from that sage's well-known capabilities of electrifying his auditory; and its achievements have been amply detailed by Aristotle, Cicero, Plutarch, Pliny, Oppian, Ælian, Athenæus, and Galen. There are, as we have seen, two or three other fish possessed of like galvanic properties; but these being exotic, did not come under the observation of the ancients, so that the *thrilling* interest they took in the narke was undivided with any competitor. What gave this fish its singular powers was for a long time a matter of the vaguest conjecture only. Galen, in his 'Treatise on Respiration,' accounts for it, as the candidate for the medical diploma in Molière's 'Médecin malgré lui' accounts for the stupefying effects of opium, who, being

asked why it makes people sleep, responds, 'Quia est in eo virtus dormitiva;' so Galen gravely tells us the torpedo affects by a torporific action peculiar to itself! Of all ancient speculations, that of the Arabian physician, Averrhoes, comes nearest to the right explanation of the phenomenon. He says, 'The power which this fish possesses of affecting the skin, seems to be of a kind analogous to that by which the magnet acts upon steel;' and as magnetism is close akin to, if not identical with electricity, this comes very near the truth, and is, in fact, a suspicion in anticipation of Dr. Bancroft's, of the identity of the electric fluid and that of the narke, which has been since fully confirmed by Mr. Walsh in his experiment at La Rochelle.* Singular as is the phenomenon of such a power residing in a fish, the absolute control which the creature has of using or forbearing to use it is not less remarkable. Experimenters know well that unless the narke be in a communicative frame of mind as well as body, though ever so much teased and tormented, she will 'die and make no sign.' In accordance with this we were not able, during a long sojourn at Naples, to obtain one shock in our own person; while many lazzarone friends who did not seek it, had frequently their arms 'astonished' (the word is Réaumur's) for a whole day after lugging a narke on board. That she can

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* Having mounted a circle of his friends upon glass stools, and taken the other necessary precautions to isolate them properly, Mr. Walsh stirred up the ire of the narke by poking him about, and then applied the connecting wires; the aura traversed along the line, and gave each friend standing at the table a conclusive and satisfactory shock. But though the near affinity of the battery of this ray with an ordinary galvanic battery is thus apparent, it is a singular circumstance that no sparks have been as yet elicited from the body of the fish, and that even whilst it is in action light bodies suspended near are not repelled, as, under the same circumstances, they would be over a Leyden jar, an electric machine, or a horse-shoe magnet.

transmit an electric shock from the depth of the sea *viâ* the net which encloses her, and numb the arm of the sturdy fisherman in the boat, so as to cause him to let it fall, as originally stated by Oppian, still continues, as it was in Redi's time, the current testimony of Mediterranean fishermen. The strongest-armed lazzarone will relate that in pulling up several narkes together, he has sometimes felt rheumatism in his shoulders all the next day. As for what Ælian's respectable mother told her over-credulous son when a boy, which he does not repudiate as a man,—viz. that water in which numb-fish have been kept becomes itself electric,—as it rests upon no other than that good old lady's authority, may at least be deemed a doubtful fact. Different authors have described the sensations of a shock from the narke differently. Oppian compares it to the distress of a man 'under an oppressive lethargy, struggling in the adamantine chains of nightmare, trying to extricate himself, but unable to stir a finger.'* Redi thus records his personal experience of its effects:—'I had scarcely secured the fish, and held it tight in my hand, when an uneasy tingling, at first confined to the part, but afterwards spreading up the whole arm to the shoulder, compelled me to relinquish my hold.' Réaumur reports 'the numbness produced by the narke' to be 'quite unlike that produced by any other agency. One feels,' says he, 'along the whole arm a kind of astonishment (une espèce d'étonnement) impossible to describe, but which, as far as sensations admit of comparison, is not unlike that painful one experienced when the 'funny-bone' has been struck smartly by something hard.'

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* *Οἷον δ' ὀρφναίοισιν ἐν εἰδώλοισιν ὀνείρων*
ἀνδρὸς ἀτυζομένοιο καὶ ἱεμένοιο φέβεσθαι
θρώσκει μὲν κραδίη, τὰ δὲ γούνατα παλλομένοιο
ἀστεμφὴς ἅτε δεσμὸς ἐπειγομένοιο βαρύνει·
τοίην γυιοπέδην τεχνάζεται ἰχθύσι νάρκη.

When the torpedo is disposed to 'astonish' any one, she furnishes to a careful observer the following premonitory indications of her intentions: the back, which—unlike that of the cat—is gibbous and raised when she is in good humour, flattens as she waxes angry, till the convex surface, gradually drawn in, becomes at length slightly concave; and at the same time the eyes, remarkably prominent during the repose of the creature, are retracted far back in the orbits: these are the precursory signals that the phials of her wrath are about to be poured forth; the shock then instantly follows, and the fish as suddenly swells out again, recovering its usual form, generally to prepare for a new attack. These shocks follow in rapid succession; she sometimes inflicts forty or fifty broadsides in the course of one minute, and they are sufficiently powerful to destroy, as by lightning, small animals exposed to their influence. Réaumur put a duck and a narke into the same vessel of water, covered with a cloth to prevent the bird using its wings. After some hours he found it *foudroyé* by repeated shocks of the enemy, and quite dead.*

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* Dr. G. Schelling's magnetic experiments on the narke are not without their interest, though they do not furnish any additional insight into the electrical phenomena exhibited by the fish. On holding a magnet capable of sustaining a weight of forty pounds within a short distance of a very powerful narke, he found that the body was much agitated, and when it was held still nearer, that the fish made every effort to escape. Placing it next in a direct contact with the surface of the water, the narke was violently agitated for about a quarter of an hour, after which it swam to the magnet and stuck. On repeating the experiment with the same fish, the result differed only in this: that whereas the ray in the first, after its attraction, stuck persistently to the magnet, in this the adhesion lasted only half an hour. The same experimenter ascertained that the fœtal numb-fish is electric, and that *steel-filings* thrown into the water restore to an exhausted narke its electric powers.

The electric properties of this enchantress of the sea suggested to ancient practitioners to try its efficacy in the cure of headache and painful nervous affections, by applying it epidermically;* and Dr. Galen, who seems to have been a strong homœopathist, advises the numb-fish (which he erroneously supposed to retain some electrical virtue after death and stewing) as a dish to paralytic patients, with a view to cure their numbness; no doubt on the 'similia similibus' principle. The electric apparatus is concisely described by Cuvier: it seems, by his account, to consist of a series of honeycomb cells filled with mucus, abundantly supplied with nerves from the eighth pair, situated between the gills and the head of the fish. 'L'espace entre les pectorales et la tête et les branchies, est rempli de chaque côté par un appareil extraordinaire, formé de petits tubes membraneux serrés les uns contre les autres, comme des rayons d'abeilles; subdivisés par des diaphragmes horizontaux, en petites cellules, pleines de mucosité, animés par des nerfs abondants qui viennent de la huitième paire.'

So much for the offensive apparatus of some particular skates. Before dismissing the family, however, we have a few words to say concerning the uses made by man of their defensive armour, or hide. These, as we have already noticed, are both hard and rough. The uneven surface, says Pliny, fits them admirably for the purposes of polishing ivory and wood, and even better than steel itself; nor, since his day, has any fitter substitute superseded their employment: the coarser-grained hides are extensively used abroad to cover trunks, the Turks make sword

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* The Abyssinians employ it in a similar manner in their treatment of fever. The patient is first strapped to a table, and the numb-fish then applied successively over every organ of the body: the operation is reported to be both very painful and very successful.

scabbards of another; and there is one familiar to all eyes—that which, painted blue or green, yet enshrines our grandsire's miniature in its oval frame, or encases in their heavy silver mountings grandmamma's spectacles. This is what that arch-rogue, Mr. Jenkinson, palmed off upon Moses Primrose's inexperience as the true, whereas it is only the false, shagreen; and as the lively green of the article is still in commerce to impose upon the greenness of youth, and as Mr. Jenkinson has left plenty of successors, and spectacles must continue to be worn and encased to the end of time; the following extract from M. Lacépède may be of service to the ignorant, and can do the better-informed no harm:—

There are two sorts of shagreen in commerce (says that gentleman); one very valuable, and seldom offered for sale; the other (Mr. Jenkinson's variety) of little value, and common in the market. The first is furnished by a skate, the other by a shark. Any one who knows the skin of the 'squale roussette' must be aware that true shagreen, which sometimes passes under this name, could not in fact be made from that fish's hide, inasmuch as it presents much larger and rounder tubercles on its surface than those on that of the roussette. It was therefore certain, continues Mr. L., whatever this might be, that veritable shagreen was not derived from this fish. As there was, then, a mystery purposely made by our neighbours in England, from whence we obtained our supplies, respecting the fish that furnished a production in such esteem and of such commercial importance, I set myself carefully to examine the various imports of unprepared hides as they were brought over from England; and though I never yet was able to get a complete integument, yet after some trouble I assured myself that these skins were the spoils of some enormous skate, and I ascertained afterwards that the individual to which they belonged was the Raie Sephin, an inhabitant of the Red Sea;* but as it is fair to presume that this

* The Red Sea swarms with divers kinds of huge sharks and skate. Of the latter it possesses several species peculiar to itself. The sephin is one of its own children: this fish possesses a weapon at the base of the tail, similar to and as formidable as that of the sea-eagle itself.

ray exists in all seas of the same latitude, I hope that our navigators, availing themselves of this information, will henceforth procure these skins direct, and save us in future the expense of a tribute we have hitherto been obliged to pay to foreign industry.*

All skate is eatable, but not all equally good: the flesh of most kinds is perhaps a little too firm to be very digestible; in some species it has a strong rank smell. To get rid of this, and of the over-rigidity of the flesh, it is usual to keep it for some days, and to bestow sundry washings upon it, to make it available for culinary purposes. Though one species at least is entered by Galen in his treatise on aliments, and particularly recommended as agreeable in flavour and light of digestion, and though probably many more were known and served in the *cuisine bourgeoise* of respectable Roman families, it was too common for epicures to write about; and Apicius accordingly does not vouchsafe a single receipt; so true is it that fashionable palates in all ages could never relish inexpensive luxuries within every plebeian's reach.

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* An ingenious French writer differs entirely from M. Lacépède here, maintaining that the value of shagreen depends not on the superiority of some species of skins over others, but solely on the degree of skill employed in preparing them. He informs us that galuchat (the French word for shagreen) was the name of a Parisian case-maker, living in the Rue Harlay, an excellent workman, who never left his shop to seek Raie Sephin skins, nor had any connection whatever with the Red Sea; but taking all that were brought him without asking whence they came, set to work cleaning, blanching, smoothing, dyeing, and finally polishing them; labours which he performed so successfully, as at last to beat the Arabians in their own art of 'chagrining,' and to give his own name to a process which he had brought to such perfection. The ancients knew nothing of this art, but employed the skins of dog-fish and rays for the purpose of polishing wood and ivory. Pliny, as we have seen, mentions it, and the Greeks turned them to the same account:—

> Ῥίνῃ τὴν φιλέουσι περισσῶς τέκτονες ἄνδρες
> Τρηχεῖ' ἀλλ' ἀγαθή.—*Matron. parod.*

What must be sought, and dearly bought,
Scari and swans, we prize;
While skate and goose, in vulgar use,
Men utterly despise.*

Vast quantities of skate are consumed everywhere, particularly in France; yet it is a fish that seldom finds its way to great tables. That people of dainty diners and nation of cooks serve it but in two ways—either fried in black butter, or else boiled, with white. M. Soyer, in his five hundred pages of closely-printed gourmandise, adds, we observe, nothing new, nor bestows upon the great Ray family a single comment of his own. Yet in spite of this aristocratic and artistic obloquy, many who are not aristos are much indebted to skate, particularly to some species, for a daily supply of good and wholesome aliment. The pastinaca batis, or common skate (off a full-grown specimen of which fifty persons may easily dine), the homelyn, the thornback, and the oxyrinchus, a very large species, which brings over Frenchmen in shoals to Plymouth, to purchase and carry away in wet sand for friends across the water, are all as meritorious fish as most of those brought into our markets; not indeed for invalids, sensualists, or epicures, but for clean tongues, healthy stomachs, and palates unvitiated by excess.

Good cookery here does much, and the Sardinians, who repudiate the oxyrinchus in their own country, where it abounds, eat it with gusto in Paris, where it is in high esteem and excellently dressed. Had Dorion, the Greek epicure, tasted it at the 'Rocher de Cancale,' or 'Trois Frères Provençaux,' he could hardly have reported, on being asked his opinion of its merits, that it 'ate like a boiled dish-clout.'

Notwithstanding the silence of Apicius, the narke was

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* Petronius.

in considerable repute at inferior tables, as may be inferred from the cook-shops at Pompeii, where it occupies a conspicuous place in the illustrated bill of fare, painted on the walls, and was no doubt largely eaten, as it is to this day in Naples, amongst a certain class of customers. In Greece the head was considered a delicacy.*

The liver of most of these fish is a great delicacy, and is in fact the proper sauce for the ray itself; we regret therefore that it is now so seldom to be met with. The days are coming, we fear, when fish-liver will be as expensive as Périgord goose-liver, and only accessible to the rich, who will then find out its merits. Already in the country cods are so often sold amerced of this viscus, as to have given origin to the notion in most inland places that they really never had a liver; and now that the experiment of extracting oil from the skate is coming into fashion, we rustics seldom get a bit of it, even for garnish. Verily, if chemists will persist in Heliogabalizing fish at this rate, there will soon be no fish-livers to eat. But the worst remains to be told. Skate oil, excellent so long as it is incorporated in the liver, spoils shortly after its removal. This fact will, we hope, soon become more generally known: at present it is retailed in inferior country drug-shops, where only cheap and nasty medicines are kept, and is sold to the poor at about half the price of cod oil, but is so rank, turbid, and offensive, that even a ploughman's stomach cannot be coaxed into bearing it. One phial only will sometimes suffice to induce such nausea as entirely to destroy any little remains of appetite the patient may have enjoyed before tasting it, and render his anorexia complete.

The narke skate vary much in size; those eaten at Naples are about two feet and a half long, and one and

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* Ἡ δὲ νάρκη δύσπεπτος οὖσα, τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἁπαλά τε καὶ εὐστόμαχα ἔχει, ἔτι δὲ εὔπεπτα.

a half wide. We have heard of one taken at Torbay, measuring four feet by two and a half, and weighing fifty-three pounds.

The skate itself enjoys the reputation of being a greedy fish; but not, as it would appear, deservedly, since Dr. Davy confined some for five months, during the whole of which time they ate nothing, yet continued to grow, notwithstanding this abstinence, and maintained their electric powers unimpaired.

In taking leave of skate, we may acquaint the uninformed, that those little square, tough, leathery pouches, with long tendrils, of polished interior, which are strewed so plentifully about our shores, are the eggs of the ray batis, or skate proper. One finds occasionally, on breaking them open, the little unborn, but perfect skate, spread out at full width, and preparing to make his egress. They were well known to Aristotle, who has described them perfectly.

Sturgeon.

Qui voluptates ipsas contemnunt, *eis* licet dicere, se acipenserem manæ non anteponere.—*Cic.*, De Fin., (citante Nonio.)

> Who has not learnt, fresh sturgeon and ham-pie
> Are no rewards for want and infamy?—*Pope.*

The etymologies of fish-names, real, plausible, absurd, or simply fictitious, would furnish an amusing article for a magazine, and we perhaps may some day attempt one. Few other, and no estuary fish, ever attained so many as the sturgeon. This word is by many supposed to come from the Gothic monosyllabic *stur*, its ancient appellation; first Latinized into *sturio*; Italice, *sturione*; and thence Gallice *esturgeon*; and in English *sturgeon*.

Jovius however, not satisfied with this etymology, derives it from Ister, the Danube having been long famous

for its sturgeon; whilst others, rejecting both, and resolved, if possible, to hellenicize the name, bent their scapulæ over their Scapulas, till lighting upon the word *στεῖρα*, a keel, they deemed all further research unnecessary, for what, they asked, could better than a keel represent the carinated form of this fish? Of these three several derivations the reader can scarcely be said to have a choice; the first is obviously the correct one; of the remaining two it may be remarked that the last is wholly untenable, as no Greek or Latin author (melioris ævi) makes use of the word sturio, whilst the surmise of Jovius, though not absolutely impossible, is, to speak in plain words, so unusual a specimen of catachrestic synecdochism, as to be scarcely admissible. The older really classical designations for this fish are, Acipenser, Helops, and Silurus, which last is certainly from the Greek *σείω*, I shake, and *οὐρὰ*, a tail, and may be familiarly rendered 'wagtail;' but these, its orthodox, as well as the apocryphal synonym huso, refer probably not to any individual species of the subgenus Siluridæ, but to several totally distinct species. Even these well-ascertained names however have been the subject of controversy; and no wonder, since Latin authors often confound, under the same name, very different fish. In the present instance, the silurus of Juvenal, and that of Ausonius, cannot possibly be accommodated to the same individual. The wagtail of the Moselle was of monster dimensions, and is indeed apostrophized by the first of these poets under the title of 'mitis balæna,' the 'gentle whale,' of that river. This, therefore, cannot be the 'fracta de merce silurus' which Crispinus hawked about the streets before his preferment at Rome.*

Doubts, too, have been entertained by ichthyologists of eminence, whose opinion is entitled to respect, whe-

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* *Vide* Silurus.

ther either helops or acipenser be designations for the sturgeon. The weight of their objection rests mainly on two lines of Ovid: one wherein the poet speaks of the 'pretiosus helops,' 'stranger to our shores;' the other where he calls acipenser 'a noble foreigner;' but these citations are by no means conclusive, nor enough to upset much *e contra* evidence that these words really represent two different kinds of sturgeon. The mere circumstance of these fish being (as, assuming them sturgeon, they *are*) of unusual occurrence in the Tiber, and when caught there of very inferior quality, so as to have induced the luxurious Romans to procure them from foreign shores, sufficiently explains the epithet 'peregrinus,' used by the poet.

There are at least four different sturgeons now clearly defined by ichthyologists; three of the four are huge fish, inhabiting the Don, the Danube, and the other rivers debouching into the Caspian and Black Seas. The mightiest of these giants (occasionally to be seen in the Po) present a long back, stretching out in the adult fish from twelve to fifteen feet; and attain sometimes the enormous weight of three thousand pounds; no power under that of a strong team of oxen can drag this monster from the river, when taken.

Ausonius gives a fine description of these mighty fish, passing up through the placid waters of the Moselle, with the rapidity of a flight of arrows, and cleaving the opposing current,—

> Whom stream and bank and silvery shoals admire,
> As on they glide,
> Parting the rippling waters that recede
> On either side.*

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* Cum tranquillos moliris in amne meatus,
Te virides ripæ, te cærula turba natantum,
Te liquidæ mirantur aquæ, diffunditur alveo
Æstus, et extremi procurrunt margine fluctus.—*Auson.*

There are many modes of capturing sturgeon recorded by ancient and modern writers. Good sturgeon tackle, according to Ælian, should be of a kind like that employed by the giant in the epigram, 'bobbing for a whale.' When these fish are taken in a river, it is only necessary to shout along the banks to frighten them into shallow water, where they become stranded; and whence, by means of strong cords and a yoke of oxen, after a lively rope-pull, they are drawn safely on shore.

Pallas informs us that, on the Volga, they are taken in decoys; little skill is required for this manner of capture, as these creatures (whose system of solids generally wants cohesion) have particularly soft brains, and are easily induced to enter and swim up a canal into a netted chamber, whence they are prevented from returning by the sudden shutting of a lock behind, and thus placed at once at the mercy of their captors. Some are taken immediately out of the water, others are drawn up the river by cords fastened round the head: great care is required in thus harnessing the fish to avoid a blow from the tail, which would knock a man down, and might easily break his leg, or send him overboard. Gmelin mentions that in the rivers of Astrachan a regularly established flotilla sails yearly on the sturionic fishery, with all the 'pomp and circumstance' of an invading fleet. Winter is the season chosen for these operations, when the sturgeon lie concealed in the depths and hollows of estuaries, hybernating sometimes alone, but more frequently occupying a common dormitory, where they suck in sufficient supplies of isinglass from each other's bodies, to keep sleek and in prime condition. The expedition, we are told, proceeds with the greatest caution, for fear of alarming the objects of the intended attack, and the penal consequences of infringing a nautical code (at once both summary and severe in its provisions on this head) secure absolute silence throughout the whole

equipment, as though the fate of an empire depended upon its success. When the boats have stolen quietly to the spot where sturgeon are known to lie, the canvas is drawn in, and the nets let down noiselessly over the ship's side. The simple creatures below see the meshy wall, which is presently to hem them round, slowly descending, but do not stir a fin: touched at length, they start a little, but soon getting reconciled to the gentle pressure of the net, lazily swim towards the landing-place. Some skill, however, is then necessary (the nets being wholly unequal to land such a load) to persuade the fish to betake themselves to shore. A plummet is let down for this purpose over the heads of the largest, which so soon as it touches the snout (a highly sensitive part) causes them to flounder and kick like high-mettled racers resenting the whip, and also to approach the shore, when, seeking to escape further indignities, they plunge and rear, and finally run themselves aground. Thus stranded, and only half immersed in water, the men draw near with caution, and gently handling the abdomen (another very sensitive part of the body), contrive to make the fish turn in the required direction, and, in spite of their unwieldy bulk, to assist materially in their own capture. The next important work is to secure the tail, and to prevent the mischief sure to ensue should this organ be left to 'wag,' according to the instinct of its owner.

The sturgeon frequents estuaries, and lives by sucking in the small fry that passes up the stream; he sometimes accompanies a troop of salmon, whence his name of salmon-pilot; but the title is undeserved, the reason he joins their company being to feed on the spawn so soon as it is deposited. In an oozy embouchure he pokes his cartilaginous snout into the mud, and finds worms enough to satisfy an appetite which is small considering the size of the fish. Sometimes a sturgeon will take

solitary possession of a particular locality, and continue there for years, defying all efforts at its capture. One of these recluses had long fixed his quarters, and a few years ago yet lived, at the embouchure of a small river along the Baian coast, whom the sailors, do what they would, could never take; his habit was to retire into the ground-floor of a submarine villa, from whence it was impossible to draw him, and thus successfully baffle pursuit.

Duly to estimate the value of this fish in a commercial point of view, several things are to be taken into account; as their size, number, extended range, the high esteem in which the flesh is held, and the important preparations made from their roes and swim-bladders. Their size varies in different species, but many of the larger weigh a thousand pounds; some even attain the extraordinary length of twenty-four feet, and weigh three thousand pounds: the head alone yields sometimes not less than a tun of oil: for *numbers*, it would be as impossible to form any guess of the hordes that swarm in the Red, Caspian, and Euxine Seas, or the legions which every year ascend the principal rivers, as to count the sand on their shores. In regard to *range*, they are found over a large portion of the globe; the following rivers in Europe being particularly famed for them: the Volga, Don, Dnieper, Danube, Po, Garonne, Loire, Moselle, Seine, Rhine, Elbe, and Oder. Then the sturgeon is the only creature eaten entire: beef and mutton require trimming and paring away superabundant fat, to say nothing of horns, hides, hoofs, and other uneatable appurtenances, reducing the Smithfield beast, when Soyer has to deal with him, to greatly diminished dimensions. With huso there is little waste; he suffers scarcely any diminution in bulk: of his dainty carcase, the whole is prime meat,—flesh, blood, cartilage (for there are no bones), ovaries, milt, liver, swim-bladder, skin, fin, tail,

and spinal marrow, all are available to the cook, and most of them delectable food. The only parts not eaten are the armour which encases, and the sinews which support, the processes of the back; and these last he leaves to be made up into scourges for the encouragement of the oxen employed in the fishery.

Everybody has heard of the value put upon the sturgeon by the ancients:—

> Τῶν δ' ἄρ' ἔλωψ κρείων δουρικλυτὸς ἡγεμόνευεν
> . . . . . τὸ δὲ γ' ἀμβροσίη μοι ἔδοξεν
> εἶν' ἦν δαίονται μάκαρες θεοὶ ἀιὲν ἐόντες.

The 'pretiosus helops,' since the moderns have learnt to make caviare from the roes, has become more 'precious' than when only the merits of the flesh were known. Yet of this, Cicero, quoting Nonius, remarks, 'that it sits lighter on a diseased mind than moral philosophy;' and he accordingly recommends sending it to friends in grief.* The roe of a sturgeon in season is of vast extent, equalling two-thirds of the total weight of the fish. The Emperor of all the Russias used to monopolize the acipenser helops, a very small species, to supply himself, and the crowned heads his allies, with the finest caviare known. Now that he has no allies, his court is no doubt more liberally supplied than it was, whilst we cannot procure it at any price. Of the flesh, Albertus reports, when it is fresh, you may take your choice, and dine either on pork or veal, the flavour depending on the part cut into! veal from the back, and pork from under the belly; the whole is admirably suited for salting, being as good cured as fresh; nothing can be conceived more exquisite than the fresh roes and milts, eaten with apple and raisin sauce, well

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* Si quem tuorum affectum mœrore videris, huic acipenserem potius quam aliquem Socraticum libellum dabis.

spiced; unless, indeed, it be the same roes converted into red or black caviare; the liver, too, is excellent, though requiring a little gall mixed with it, to overcome its sweetness, and prevent cloying the stomach. Cuvier confirms Albertus' opinion as to the taste of the flesh, which he compares to French veal, the very best of meat; and this, though a high, is not an undeserved compliment.

Platina considers 'chine of sturgeon delicately salted, just as it reddens under the operation, as the *ne plus ultra* for an epicure.' It is to be put into a stew-pan, and kept constantly moist with a basting of oil and vinegar, and when thoroughly impregnated with this mixture, to be served up in the same sauce. The same author, who recommends a short delay before cooking when the sturgeon is fresh, prefers stewing to any other mode of dealing with it. 'For this purpose,' says he, 'place your fish in equal parts of water, wine, and vinegar, with a sprinkling of salt, and simmer over a slow fire as long as if it were veal.' The proper condiment to serve with sturgeon so cooked is a white sauce, flavoured with ginger; or an onion sauce, mixed with French mustard, which is itself a composition very mild, and by no means like our biting Durham meal. Kentman rejects all white and recommends a brown sauce, made up of sugar, pepper, ginger, cloves, a handful of Corinth currants, and the pulp of any dried fruits, cherries, plums, or grapes, etc. Some eat it, like Publius Gelo, with 'shrimp' sauce; and this was probably a usual mode with ancient *traiteurs* of celebrity in Rome's sturionic days, when this fish was carried round to the guests at banquets with an accompaniment of flutes and trumpets, by attendants wearing crowns.

CHAPTER XXI.

OPSOPHAGY.

Λέγομεν οὖν ὀψοφάγους οὐ τοὺς βόεια ἐσθίοντας (οἷος ἦν Ἡρακλῆς), οὐδὲ φιλόσυκον (οἷος ἦν Πλάτων ὁ φιλόσοφος) ἀλλὰ τοὺς περὶ τὴν ἰχθυοπωλίαν ἀναστρεφομένους.—Athen.

Ancient Fish-Dealers.

Tunc immensa cavi spirant mendacia folles
Conspuiturque sinus.—*Juv.*

HAVING now brought our ancient and modern notices of fish to a close, we purpose, before taking leave of our readers, to give a short outline sketch of the fish-dealers and cooks, the 'flies' and the feasts of classic times; beginning with the purveyors of these universal luxuries, and ending with the parasites who came in for so large and undeserved a share.

No two classes can well be more unlike in character and worldly circumstances, than fishermen and fish-dealers: of the modest, placid nature of the former, we have already spoken in our introductory chapter; their lot is as lowly as their career is one of toil and danger:

Hard is the life the weary fisher finds,
Who trusts his floating mansion to the winds,
Whose daily bread the fickle sea maintains,
Unceasing labour and uncertain gains.*

But the dealer in fish is a very different being, belong-

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* Oppian.

ing to a class who are generally as well prospered as they are insolent.

> Τόδε δ' ὡς ἔοικε τὸ γένος ὥσπερ θηρίον
> ἐπίβουλόν ἐστι τῇ φύσει καὶ πανταχοῦ

is the character of the Greek ichthyopolist drawn by a countryman; and if we look to the dames engaged in the same calling at home, we must admit that did they wear caps, the following is one that would fit any of them :—

> 'All mad to speak and none to hearken,
> They set the very dogs a-barking;
> No chattering makes so loud a din
> As fish-wives o'er a cup of gin.'*

'There are some charges,' says Windham, 'which can no more be replied to than the scolding of a fishwoman in Billingsgate.' But these Billingian ladies have found a Latin muse in an English poet,† who awards each of them, in her schola rhetorica, full honours for an unusual force in the use of trope and figure, and for unmatched volubility of tongue :

> Sermonem densis ornatrix floribus ornat,
> Et fundit varios, ingeminatque tropos . . .
> Et nervi, et veneres, et vis et copia fandi
> Insunt ; et justum singula pondus habent.

Such Amazons, had there been no one to do justice to their powers and flowers of speech, would no doubt have proved very sufficient trumpeters in their own behalf; and it was not without good reason therefore, their prowess being universally acknowledged, that the goddess of Dulness, when marshalling her forces, determined to put these Bellonas in the van :‡—

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* Swift. † Vincent Bourne.

‡ The more remarkable of these wenches found, as early as the year 1620, a contemporary who, under the title of 'West-

Let Bawdry, Billingsgate, my daughters dear,
Support my front, and oaths bring up the rear.

In Edinburgh, where women do not in general abuse the privilege of their sex, the fishwife alone has a long tongue, and generally a sharp one: in Dublin all are well furnished with this member; and it is mentioned in the memoirs of the late celebrated Irish Demosthenes (as Frenchmen delight to call Daniel O'Connell), quite as a feather in his cap, that he once beat an Irish ichthyopolist of the feminine gender at her own weapons; effectually silencing his Celæno by bringing unexpected charges against her reputation of an extraordinary nature, filched out of the elements of trigonometry and Euclid. The same characteristic Tisiphonism is displayed by the craft abroad: the poissardes of Paris have ever been distinguished for a free use of words, and abuse of persons:

Hic sibi perpetuam legit facundia sedem;
Nec modus hic verbis nec figura abest.

In Sicily the noise made in disposing of the mutest of creatures is perfectly stunning; and in Italy at least half the *accidentes* and *accios* of the total population of a town are vented in the fishmarket; or if we look back into the history of ichthyopolism to times when the modern *pescheria* was represented in Greece by an agora, and in Italy by a forum, we find that even then, as now, it was a noisy calling, entirely in the hands of Ranters. So foul-mouthed at one time was the tribe at Athens, that a benevolent Samian (Lynceus) wrote a book expressly to teach young housekeepers (*δύσωνοι*) the art of battling successfully with 'homicidal fishmongers,' so as

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ward for Smelts,' published their memoirs: we hope their daughters, who have in noways degenerated since that time, will also shortly find a biographer.

to overcome them at vernacular slang, and to bear away the object of contention at a reasonable price. That such a *rade mecum* was really wanted, there can be little doubt, if we may believe the testimony of contemporaries. 'Whenever,' says a complainant, 'a citizen has occasion to address a great functionary of state, he is sure to receive a courteous reply; but if he should venture on a word of expostulation with any of these execrable fish-dealers (*κατάρατοι ἰχθυόπωλαι*), he is instantly overpowered by a volley of abuse.' 'I asked one of these gentry the other day,' writes complainant two, 'the price of a glaucus' head, but the fellow looked gloatingly upon it, and, as Telephus* might have done, deigned not a word of reply. I put the same question to a neighbour, who forthwith began to amuse himself by playing with a polypus; a third, to whom I then spoke, was worse than either, for he at once flew into a passion—flared up, *ἔπρησε*, and then, choking, swore at me in half-articulate oaths.' 'Assumption in great men, to whom the state looks up, and has delegated her dignity and authority, must be borne with a good grace,' writes a third complainant, 'but the insolent bearing of these ichthyopolist scoundrels is worse than gall and wormwood, *πικρότερ' ἔστιν αὐτῆς τῆς χολῆς*.' Fishmongers were accordingly designated by many terms of obloquy and reproach, all of which clearly show what the Greek public at large thought of them: thus they were 'monsters,' 'gorgons,' 'homicides,' 'wild beasts,' and a race more hateful than either usurers or quacks, as we read in Antiphanes' play, *μισοπόνηρος*, *i.e.* the 'Rogue Hater.' But overbearing insolence was only one of their bad traits: they were also the biggest cheats and liars under the sun. The sea, they said, was open to all, but fish was only for those who could pay for it;

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* A notorious fish-glutton, not only an *ὀψόφαγος*, but a great *κατ*(cat)*οψόφαγος*.

and knowing beforehand that all citizens who had money would have this delicacy at any rate, they imposed their own price; till their proceedings at length became so nefarious, that the state was compelled to interpose its authority to check the nuisance. 'I bought a conger this morning,' is the confession of an Athenian cormorant, 'at such a price as Priam might have refused Achilles for the ransom of Hector's body.'* A cook here, says Pliny, speaking of Rome, sometimes costs as much as a triumph; and a fine fish will frequently fetch as much as a cook; no wonder, then, that to 'go to market rich and to return poor,' became at length quite a proverbial expression. 'These ichthyopolists had needs be rich, since they every day carry off the tenth part of the revenue of the State. If Neptune received but one-twentieth of the proceeds iniquitously wrung by these men from the public by the sale of his marine stores, he would be by far the wealthiest of the gods.' These traders were further accused of never willingly selling fresh fish at all, and, if compelled to do so, of parting with them in such croaking accents and with such sinister looks, as to make customers feel uncomfortable at their purchase; when however the gills were become livid, the scales dry, and the smell unsavoury, each rascal's face would beam with pleasure, his voice be pitched in a different key, and his tongue wax eloquent in maintaining that every article in his basket was fresh as a cucumber, and scented like a rose. Juvenal's picture of an esurient Greek, which we subjoin in a note,† is in perfect keeping with what is elsewhere copiously re-

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* Exanimumque auro corpus vendebat Achilles.—*Virg.*

† In what security the villain lies!
In what warm tones suspicion he defies!
Sunbeams and thunderbolts boldly he cites,
And all the darts of Cirrha's lord invites;

corded of the character of Attic fish-dealers, though their insolence, trickery, and extortion were not confined to any one place in particular. 'I thought,' says an Athenian quoted in Athenæus, 'that our city alone could produce such a set; but a larger acquaintance with mankind has taught me that fishmongers are alike all over the world.' These bold and insolent general practitioners in iniquity at length found a check; the various states interposing to protect each its own public against their exaction and insolence.

'No legislator after Solon can be compared to Aristonicus, who first made it imperative on salesmen to sell fish standing by the side of their balance,* not sitting at their ease contumeliously to cheat as heretofore: and it will be a still further improvement should our legislature require them to treat with their customers suspended to one of those uneasy machines by which the divinities are wont to descend from Olympus to visit us; this would cut short much protracted haggling and altercation.' A second law, which this same Aristonicus had influence enough with his countrymen to carry out, enacted, that 'everything should be ticketed and sold at the registered price, so that old men and old women, the ignorant and the young, might all come to market and

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The spear of Mars now resolutely dares,
By the new quiver of Diana swears;
Pallas and all her terrors next he braves,
And his whose trident moves the Ægean waves.
Whatever arms the arsenals of light
Prepare for punishment of impious wight;
Invokes them all; and prays he may be fed
On the loved features of his infant's head
Soused in Egyptian vinegar, if aught
Against his fishes' freshness can be brought.

* Alexis.

purchase *κατὰ τρόπον*, *i. e.* at a reasonable rate. The least infringement of this ordinance subjected the dealer to confinement in chains, besides a heavy mulct paid to the state.' Such enactments no doubt would have some good effect, and convince a few of these rogues, by personal experience (always the plainest), that honesty in fish, as in everything else, was the best policy in the end. But though the public was thus as far as possible secured from wrong, yet various ways were found out to elude the vigilance of the magistrate. Archippus speaks of an Egyptian rogue who, in the act of selling fish, and whilst the customer was looking for his purse, would surreptitiously filch the trail from a scarus, remove the liver from a skate, or even cut off a glaucus' or conger's head, and yet present it in such a way that the fraud was not perceived. 'The ingenious devices had recourse to by our fish-factors, plainly show,' observes a Greek poet, 'the superiority of their tribe to our own: we can only twist the same idea a hundred ways, but there is no end to the inventiveness of the ichthyopolist. Look now at their ingenuity: being prohibited by law from keeping fish fresh by means of the watering-pot, and finding that customers, as the day advances, become more and more shy, two salesmen agree together to get up a mock fight; when, after squaring at one another for some time, one, at a preconcerted signal, pretending to be hurt, falls under the other's blows over his booth, and amongst his fish. An immediate cry for water is raised (*βοᾷ τις ὕδωρ*); the mock bruiser becomes a mock penitent, and stands now over the body of his vanquished friend (*rainein*) to rain restorative lymph upon him, and by the time his clothes are completely saturated, the prostrate man revives: when it is found that the fish also have revived by the same process, and look almost as fresh and inviting as when first taken out of the sea. Another trick of the trade, a clever mode of extorting double change from

customers,* is thus told by an Athenian gentleman, who had been duped. 'Having, says he, already purchased my day's supply of fish at an exorbitant price, to avoid useless discussion I put down a piece of money, and asked for the difference; on receiving the change, and finding a deficiency, I pointed it out to the dealer (a rogue who grows long hair for a pretended offering to some god, but palpably to hide the brand on his forehead). 'See here, my man! the change is short.' 'All the world,' growled he, 'knows my practice is to sell by the Ægina currency.' 'Well, but even then, my good friend, it is short, on your own showing.' 'Ah, sir, you are dull: I *sell* by the mint of Ægina, but I *pay* in Athenian pieces: do you understand now?'

Great fortunes were often realized by these Greek salesmen, many of whom came to keep villas, and to live in style. The name of one great salt-fish seller was enrolled in the city-books; and his two sons, nicknamed 'Scomber,' enjoyed the like honour: many others, besides these who carried on the same traffic, had to bless Fortune and the Gods that they were born when the sun was in 'Pisces.'

The craft, always a prosperous one, has in more modern days been greatly indebted to the Church of Rome for its present status and importance. It was no doubt the great consumption of fish during Lent, which led primarily to the opulence of traders, and eventually to those civic privileges which are now enjoyed by their body at home and abroad. The corporation of these Cetarii in London is inferior to few of the metropolitan guilds, either in its wealth or influence. 'So early as in 1381,' says Mr. Moule, 'Sir William Walworth, a renowned cetarius and Mayor of London, slew the insur-

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* Κατ' *ἀμφότερα τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἔχει*,—he takes double change out of me.

gent, Wat Tyler, in Smithfield, in the presence of King Richard the Second. His dagger is carefully preserved among the archives of the Company, and the event used formerly to be commemorated in city pageants during the mayoralty of a fishmonger. Henry the Sixth united all the branches of the trade in one, and incorporated them under the general name of 'the Fishmongers of London.'

The arms of the salt-fishmongers were—gules, three crossed keys saltierwise, or, on a chief azure, three dolphins embowed argent; they are emblazoned in a splendid stained glass window in the north transept of Canterbury Cathedral. The stock-fishmongers have for arms—azure, two sea luces in saltier proper, with coronets over their mouths or: the fish here intended is the merlucius.

These companies had no less than six halls for the transaction of business,—two in Old Fish-street, two in New Fish-street, and two in Thames-street: they were under the patronage of St. Peter, and were benefactors to many different churches. Formerly they maintained three chaplains, who assisted at their funerals; the superb ornamental pall used on these occasions is yet preserved.

Cooks.

Πολλὰ δ' ἄναντα κάταντα κατὰ στίχας ἦλθ' ὁ μάγειρος,
Σείων ὀψοφοροὺς πίνακας κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον,
Τῷ δ' ἅμα τεσσαράκοντα μέλαιναι χύτραι ἕποντο,
Αὐτὰρ ἀπ' Εὐβοίας λοπάδες τόσαι ἐστιχόωντο.

Matron. parod.

Non satis est ars sola coco, servire palato;
Namque cocus domini debet habere gulam.—*Mart.*

Cookery, according to a Greek sage, teaches τὰ μάλιστα συντείνοντα πρὸς τὸ ζῆν καλῶς, the art of living agree-

ably; and as by good cookery life is quite as much prolonged as it is embellished, we should be prepared to expect that its professors, on such solid grounds to man's esteem, should have become ubiquitous favourites; and such is indeed the fact: no class of persons have ever enjoyed so large or so lasting a reputation as cooks; each age has handed them down to the next as a race to 'whose diversified services'* states and individuals were alike beholden. Whilst other callings have had their day, and only prospered in certain soils, this has flourished everywhere, and under every dynasty; anciently under Persian satraps, Greek archons, Sicilian despots, tetrarchs, the triumvirs, and the Cæsars; and more recently under the sway of sultans, caliphs, czars; and in imperial, pontifical, presidential, princely, and archducal kitchens. No convulsion of a state ever disturbed its cooks; the most violent and sudden change of the supreme power has never in any degree abridged theirs. Persecution, wherever else she sought her victims, took none from their ranks; 'whatever broils disturbed the street,' they broiled 'in peace at home;' and often, no doubt, has the bright kitchen battery proved a safer sanctum during a reign of terror than either convent or church; amidst scenes of lawless violence, and the carnage of war, the *traiteur* of every age has calmly cooked for the combatants; and never losing, or in danger of losing, his head, has prosecuted his important avocation under circumstances the most alarming; grilling 'poulets à la Marengo' amid the smoke and din of a camp; elaborately preparing in some mountain cave the supper of a robber chief and his clan, or gaily carolling Caradori's sprightly air of 'ça m'est égal' to the eels he was skinning for a crew of piratical cut-throats. The common ally of humanity, he has become everybody's friend; with him no

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* Σκευασία ποικίλη.—*Menand.*

one would willingly quarrel, for all are sensible that such a man alone can maintain public order and domestic comfort; by him all clubs are held together; nor could the political world get on better without his aid, for what modern ministry could hope to hold out a month but by means of those cabinet puddings and other skilful culinary *liaisons* which unite men of the most opposite sentiments and interests into one catholic fellowship, by the tenderest of all sympathies, the great sympathetic nerve of their stomachs? No country ever prospered where these artists have been either unknown or neglected. Sparta may be cited as a memorable warning to other nations of the danger of quarrelling with functionaries so important, for, having made the rash experiment of trying to do without cooks, the result proved, as might have been anticipated, a complete failure: but it was then too late to undo the mischief such precipitancy had occasioned, and the ungrateful country, unable to recall her proscribed sons (now settled and flourishing citizens in other states), sopped penitential bread in nauseous black broth, further embittered by the daily reflection that she had brought it all upon herself. The rest of Greece, more correctly appreciating the value of cooks, treated them very differently, and it is one of these flourishing representatives of the ancient art whom we shall now endeavour to delineate to the reader. The Greeks may be said to have borrowed their early kitchen from the luxurious Asiatics, whence it might seem more natural to have taken our 'lay' *chef* from Asia; but as they 'touched not without adorning it,' the apt pupils soon surpassed their instructors, while the world at large came to reap the advantage of their matured experience and very careful training. Even at Rome, where sumptuous living had reached its height, the chief apron was generally either a Greek or the disciple of a Greek. And just as the other countries of Europe are now indebted

to France for their 'kitchen oracles' and 'guides,' so the ancient civilized world confessed here it owed everything to Greece, and these Greek cooks appear to have supplied, not only their own land, but every other civilized community as well.

Being great talkers, it will not be difficult to draw up from the scattered notices they have left us a *résumé* of what was considered either as an indispensable requisite or as 'desirable accomplishments' for the exercise of the savoury calling. The more conveniently to bring this together, we will suppose one of these ancient chatterboxes undergoing a strict cross-examination in his kitchen catechism before a wealthy Athenian, who previous to hiring would be fully acquainted with the acquirements of a domestic about to cater to the comfort or discomfort of his family. 'You bring, sir, a high character from your last place, yet before we enter into any final agreement, or I venture to trust my own or my friends' stomachs implicitly in your hands, I would know what you look upon as essential points in a cook's education.' 'I have no difficulty in answering your beltistic excellency, having often thought it over already; the first thing indispensable to entering upon this service creditably to himself is, for a man to be in the flower of his physical and intellectual strength, and also that he should be willing as well as able to apply himself to its arduous duties with an unremitting patience and zeal.' 'Good; and then?' 'Then, as his master is to converse with him daily, he should be a man of pleasing address, a politecity Maeson, and not a coarse provincial *tettix*.'* 'Agreed; and then?' 'Next I hold it of equal necessity that he should be perfect in every organ of perception, and that each sense should have been duly trained and improved by constant and careful exercise; he should have

* Τέττιξ was the name given to country or provincial cooks.

a delicate thermometric touch; a tongue both clean and sensitive: an ear prompt, like that of Dionysius, to catch the faintest of whispers whether at home or abroad; nor need I add, that his must needs be a hawk's eye for game, and a Cretan nostril* for fish.' 'I do not dispute it; prithee what further?' 'Further, he must be a man of *nous*, and our excellent poet accordingly makes no mistake where he says in his praise of cooks:

Οὐδὲν ὁ μάγειρος τοῦ ποιητοῦ διαφέρει,
ὁ Νοῦς γάρ ἐστιν ἑκατέρῳ τούτων τέχνη.'

'As you and he are agreed on the point, I will not dispute it; what next?' 'Why, in the next place, that he apply his *nous* aright in studying the palate; a due knowledge of which, however simple it may seem to the thoughtless and ignorant, is in fact beset with almost as many difficulties as *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, know thyself.' 'Indeed! how does that appear?' 'Nothing is more easy to state or apprehend. Take the case of an oculist unfamiliar with that delicate organ the eye; of an aurist who has never penetrated into the labyrinth of the ear; or of a dentist knowing nothing of the teeth he is called upon to manipulate, and you have just so many apt illustrations of the case of a cook unacquainted with the palate; for that is his especial organ, and everybody looks, and has a right to look, to him to understand it. Now, this knowledge, from the greater complexity of the organ which is the seat of it, is of more difficult acquisition than that of any one or indeed of all the other senses put together. Men's fingers judge pretty much alike of hard and soft, of rough and smooth, of wet and dry, of hot and cold; ears, too, make the same diagnosis of harsh and musical, low and loud sounds; eyes, again, as seldom substitute

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* The Cretans were famous for the fineness of their scent, so that the *ῥὶς Κρητικὴ* was as well known in Greece as the *odora canum vis* everywhere.

one colour for another; while the testimony of a hundred noses in regard to an odour would not be found to vary very materially; but palates differ from each other so widely and so variously, that scarce two agree in every particular: A's delight is B's aversion; and so notorious are these diversities, that men, to avoid a perpetual quarrel over their food, are agreed to hold that 'all tastes are respectable,' and 'that no man may find fault with his neighbour's, or, as the Latins say, 'de gustibus non est disputandum.' Men may be constant in purpose and steady in every other desire, but the desires of no one's palate ever continue long the same—they vary from disorder, from caprice, from fashion; and are so modified again by age, that *suum cuique*—'one meat for one mouth'—is not the motto of a cook who would keep his place; he must look upon each customer as a sort of Cerberus, who has at least three palates to be appeased, and be acquainted with at least a dozen dishes for each. Nor is this all, for as every individual has his own particular organ which is subject to very many changes, so there are national palates quite as abnormal and capricious, which must also be duly attended to by him who professes to cook for the whole world. Thus you see, most worshipful sir, that the supremely important organ of taste (which has been rightly called *οὐρανὸς*,* heaven, from the heavenly sense it administers) requires profound study, and that no one is fit to enrol himself as a cook who has not studied it in all its physiological vagaries; and since whilst he lives, sound or sick, every man's palate is the cook's, he must likewise have traced its changes in fever as in health. Do you follow me, noble sir? *νοεῖς τὸν τύπον;*' '*Ἄπολλον*, I should hope so; *καὶ*

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* *Οὐρανὸς*, besides the more common acceptation of the word, means also the palate; punning upon which, a Greek gourmet, when he scalded his palate, said he had burnt his heaven!

τί φαίνεται;' 'And what do you think then of our profession, *τέχνη*?' 'The grand art of all, no doubt; and as you have strongly interested, perhaps you will further enlighten me by some practical illustration of what you have just been saying.' 'With pleasure: suppose me now engaged on trial, and a large party coming to dine with us next week, I should immediately request to know the composition of our table; not only the number of guests we were to entertain, but whence each came,—whether, *ex. gr.*, there were to be any citizens of Rhodes, for in that case it would be necessary to send to the market and buy at any price a whacking silurus, to be boiled and set before them in its own liquor; these gentlemen's addiction to boiled silurus (all tastes, we have said, are respectable) is well known in our circle; and we style it 'silurismus.' If, again, we expect any Byzantines at table, everything for them must be saturated, first with wormwood, then with salt, nor must an abundant supply of onions be wanting in every dish. For many island visitors we have to cater differently: these worthy gentlemen have extremely well-informed palates, and while they require the most delicate fish and dainty made-dishes, criticize the cook's labours with so much discrimination and judgment that I always consider it a privilege and a pleasure to dress a dinner for such men. For Arcadian Highlanders, who seldom see the sea, and devour greedily, in any condition, whatever marine produce is served up to them, a supply of melandrya, cybia, and other strong-scented provisions from the drysalters suffices, and it would be a most profligate waste to set before them delicate fish which they neither desire nor appreciate. Their cooks inure these men to vile dishes all of one smell, and with another, had they noses, ought each to be sent back in disgrace to the kitchen:

Λαβὼν
ἕκαστον αὐτῶν κατὰ μέρος προσπαρδέτω.

For Spartan friends again, to secure their good word, I must concoct the filthy dark broth for which they are famous, agreeably to the suggestion of the poet—'black broth subdues him, and a boiled cow's heel.'* Lastly, should any Ionians be at table, they would assuredly look out for that far-famed Lydian stew, the *candaulium*, to which they are all so partial; but unless it be most carefully condimented and seasoned, and the fried bread and toasted cheese well mixed up with the very complex gravy, they would put it from them with a shudder. Besides all these various claims made on our professional knowledge and resources, dependent on national diversities of taste; differences in the circumstances of individuals, as well as those arising from age, cause others, for which also we should be properly prepared: for instance, it would be quite superfluous to present a love-sick youth, wholly absorbed in the charms of an absent mistress, with any substantial entertainment; he is a patient requiring various little sentimental side-dishes; fish easy of digestion, such as smelts, or a small tender cuttle, viands which, while they attract the eye, may be easily coaxed down with a glass or two of some light wine, even by the most abstracted lover; for an old man's supper something warm is required to heat the blood, and to make it flow freely through his veins: I keep for this class of bald-headed clients, a cupboard full of all manner of aphrodisiac spells—coriander, pepper, anise, and the like, which send them, Anacreon-like, at eighty to write odes full of gallantry and grace. When I have to feed philosophers,

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* *Δάμνα μιν ζωμός τε μέλας ἀκροκώλια θ' ἑφθά.* From the composition of this dish Dr. Martin Lyster infers that the Spartans did not spring from the Jews: 'Jus nigrum Spartanorum adeo celebratum *αἱματίαν* (sanguiculum, porcinum puta) fuisse astatur Jul. Poll.; quod si verum est, strenuo argumento est, Spartanos non fuisse e Judæis oriundos.'

too, of whatever sect, I like to know beforehand; since, however each school may differ in its airy speculations, all are equal locusts at table, and expect the largest rations, and the most solid provision the market affords. Even your collectors of taxes, though they look so melancholy and resigned to a painful profession, do not like us to neglect them, but stipulate to have their insides well lined with a dainty stewed *sparus*, a glaucus' head *au bleu*, or an eel roasted in his skin, and reeking in copaic fatness.' 'Beyond these intricacies of the palate, is there anything else which a cook must know?' 'Plenty! plenty! he must be also a chemist and a doctor, *καὶ τῆς ἰατρικῆς τι μετέχειν μοι δοκεῖ*, else he will continually make mistakes in his sauces, and, by mixing incompatible ingredients,* sometimes purge or vomit a whole table; at others will arouse, to the discomfort of the festive board, those ill-bred soundings of complaining flatulency which make guests ashamed of themselves or of each other; or, worse still, in his ignorance,

ἢδ' ἀπειρία
τῶν νῦν μαγείρων κατανοεῖ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
ποία 'στιν,—

will serve a supper with death in the pot,—*φεῦ, φεῦ*, and fie! fie!—for cookery, like every other branch of human knowledge, has many professors, but few real proficients. Yes, noble sir, there are a thousand *ὀψόποιοι* to dish and do for you, to one who is a real Mageiros, a properly instructed cook; the main and essential difference between the two being, that one has, whilst the other wants, those useful qualifications of sagacity, forethought, and judgment, so indispensable to eminence and success here, as in every other sphere of life. Though not a poet by profession, I sometimes jot down with charcoal in the even-

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* *Τί γὰρ ἂν εὖ γένοιτ' ἔτι*
τῆς ἰδιότητος πρὸς ἑτέραν μεμιγμένης,
καὶ συμπλεκομένης οὐχὶ συμφώνους ἁφάς.

ing any idea which deserves recording, that may have occurred to me whilst following my avocations; and in the following lines you have what I conceive to be the distinction plainly pointed out:—

To trim and cut,
Scale, scour, and gut,
Put things before the fire;
Pull peacock, duck,
Or turkey pluck,
A tettix may aspire.
Mæsonic cooks, from Cadmus sprung,
All such pretenders scout,
Who, so they pop their pudding in,
Care not how it comes out;
Who serve flesh fit for cannibals,
Or boil'd to shreds and pieces,
Trusting blind chance to rule the roast,—
'Αλλ' *ἔστι τις φρόνησις.*'

'Is there any other mode of distinguishing a Mæson from a pretender?' 'Yes; one causes every guest to sneeze and weep the supper through; the other, more discreet in the use of the pepper-box and onions, never makes such a blunder; and whilst all professors have one common stock to deal with, the real cook manufactures out of it, much,—he that is no cook, nothing: add to which, you will always find in the former a devotion to his art, in the latter a devotion only to self-interest. Whatever he may already know, the conscientious *chef* studies to possess himself of the hints of distinguished predecessors and contemporaries, and for this purpose he dare not neglect the literature of his profession. Philosophers make much talk about their 'midnight oil,' yet when it has been burnt out, what is the world often the better for all their pretended discoveries? but our researches, unlike theirs, are at once practical and useful; and no sooner are we installed and fixed in some good place, than our ambition is roused, and we resolve to lose no opportunity of advancing cookery, nor of leaving

the savour of a good name to be quoted by those who shall succeed to our spirit and our spit. With this view, we pass many a sleepless, many a thoughtful night, leaning over our blinking lamps when all other eyes are closed, and philosophy itself snoring; then (the moon and mice our only witnesses) we ponder well, as we turn over in slow succession the mctuous pages of Achides the Chian, of the Sidonian Tyndaris, or those of that equal sage, the profound Zophyrinus, too happy if the morning finds us with some of our nocturnal lucubrations disposed of, thought out, and settled.' 'Pray tell me anything else touching a cook's duty that may occur to you.' 'He should be versed in general literature, as well as in that connected with the profession. One of our poets says, he never knew a cook worth his salt who had not got up his Democritus, a sentiment in which I entirely coincide:—

Διόπερ μάγειρον ὅταν ἴδῃς ἀγράμματον
μὴ Δημόκριτόν τε πάντα διανεγνωκότα
καὶ τὸν Ἐπικούρου κανόνα, μισθώσας ἄφες.

'What next?' 'He of whom I would speak, and such a one as you would wish to hire, must know his place, and be able to teach others theirs. As head of the kitchen, he will see, as I do, that every member, each in his department, is attentive to catch, and prompt to execute, the instructions conveyed to him. 'Holloa there! Alexis, tortoise! is that fire to go out? You dog Philip, keep your eyes on those cutlets! Ha! Philemon, will you never learn to truss a fowl? Ulysses, botcher, ar'n't you ashamed to stew me up a pig like that? You lazy lout! give over whistling, and skim the grease off the mattyas I entrusted to your care. Creon, you scum of a scullion, do you expect the conger to put himself down to roast? Such commands issued from our sanctum generally suffice: the varlets know my voice, and fear it like

Jove's thunder; but if I observe the slightest demur, I rush out upon my rebels, spit in hand, and pointing to that Homeric inscription which I am careful to put up over the great fire-place, εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω, 'scullions, respect your *chef*,' quell it at once. It is his also to settle the unities of the entertainment, and to see that all be done in the right time and place;

> The where, the when;
> The gentlemen
> Inviting, and invited;
> What fish to stew,
> What serve *au bleu*,
> And see that nothing's slighted.'*

'It certainly does seem that much is required to make a good cook.' 'Yes; but besides all I have mentioned, he at whose feet I had the happiness to be brought up, instructed us that no true adept in the art would rest satisfied with the mere attainment of these accomplishments, but would be studious to add to them some knowledge of the *stars*, of *architecture*, and *strategics*.†

> Such lore, he said, did well befit
> The man who *thought* beside his spit,
> And, undeterr'd by noise or heat,
> Calmly conn'd o'er each new receipt;
> Star-knowledge first, for meats are found
> With rolling months to go the round;
> And, as the days are short or long,
> Yield flavours delicate or strong:
> *Fishes*, 'tis known, as seasons vary,

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* Συνιδεῖν τόπον, ὥραν, τὸν καλοῦντα, τὸν πάλιν
δειπνοῦντα, πότε δεῖ, καὶ τίν' ἰχθὺν ἀγοράσαι.
Thesmophorus.

† Ἐδίδασκεν ἡμᾶς πρῶτον ἀστρολογεῖν Σίκων·
ἔπειτα, μετὰ ταῦτ' εὐθὺς ἀρχιτεκτονεῖν,
περὶ φύσεως κατεῖχε πάντας τοὺς λόγους·
ἐπὶ πᾶσι τούτοις ἔλεγε τὰ στρατηγικά.
Πρὸ τῆς τέχνης ἔσπευδε ταῦθ' ἡμᾶς μαθεῖν.—*Sosipater.*

Are prime to eat or quite contrary;*
The feather'd tribes, like those of fin,
Change with each sign the sun goes in:
So that, who only knows what cheer,
Not when to buy, 's no cook, 'tis clear...
The man who would his kitchen show
Must also architecture know;
And see, howe'er it blows without,
His fire, like Vesta's, ne'er goes out,
Nor soot unsightly smudge the dish,
And spoil the *vol-au-vent* or fish.
Nor only to the chimney looks
Our true Mageiros, king of cooks;
Far from the smoke, that his keen eye
May clearly view the day's supply,
He opes a window, in that spot
Where Sol peeps in, and shows what's what:
The range and dresser, ceiling, floor,
What cupboard, shelves, and where the door,
Are his to plan; and if he be
The man I mean, to each he'll see.
Lastly, to marshal in array
The long-drawn line of man and tray;†
The light-arm'd first, who nimbly bear
Their glittering *lances*‡ through the air,

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* Ἔαρι μὲν χρόμιος ἄριστος,
ἀνθίας δὲ χειμῶνι.—*Ananius.*
Τοῦτο δεῖ γὰρ εἰδέναι,
τίν' ἔχει διαφθορὰν πρῶτον, ὦ βέλτιστε·
γλαυκίσκος ἐν χειμῶνι, καὶ θερεί
ποῖος περὶ δύσιν πλειάδος συνειδέναι
ἰχθὺς, ὑπὸ τροπάς τ' ἐστὶ χρησιμώτατος.—*Ananius.*

† Boileau has well described the stateliness of a march of flunkeys bringing in the second course of an entertainment at which he 'assisted':—

Un valet le portoit marchant à pas comptés,
Comme un recteur suivi des quatre facultés;
Deux marmitons crasseux, revêtus de serviettes,
Lui servoient de massiers et portoient deux assiettes,
L'une de champignons avec des ris de veau,
L'autre de pois verts qui se noyoient dans l'eau.

‡ Lanx, lancis, a plate; pl. lances.

And then the oplitic troop to goad,
Who bend beneath their *chargers'* load,
And, empty dishes ta'en away,
Place solid flank for new assay;
While heavy tables creak and groan
Under the '*χορὸς λοπάδων.*'*
All this demands such skill, as wields
The veteran chief of hard-won fields!
Who rules the roast might rule the seas,
Or *baste* his foes with equal ease;
And cooks who are equal to a *rout*,
Might take a town, or storm redoubt.'

'The culinary art certainly rises in importance as you point out its many ramifications and connections; is anything more required of its true professors?' 'Botany, sir, that charming study, especially the interesting branch of which it treats of pot-herbs both foreign and domestic.' 'That is clear; anything else?' 'Yes, that which is required for eminence in everything—originality.† We leave to younger hands the routine of boiled and roast, and invent novelties. Apropos of these, have you seen the models of my late astronomical pie?‡—accounts of which have gone the round of

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* Λοπὰς, *άδος*, a fish-plate, patina, catinus, scutula, paropsis, are some of the names for service-dishes of divers forms and sizes, with or without covers.

† Inventive cooks and poets both agree
To show their powers in nice variety:
Hence mackerel charms the palate and the eyes,
Though dressed with inconsistent gooseberries;
Crabs, salmons, lobsters, are with fennel spread,
Who never touch'd that herb till they were dead;
Yet no man lards salt-pork with orange-peel,
Or garnishes his lamb with spitchcock'd eel.
King, Art of Cookery.

‡ We read of such a pie in Athenæus, on the crust of which were represented the signs of the Zodiac, besides an immense number of the more singular productions of nature in the various

the newspapers, and have brought me no end of orders for others. It cost me (as all my great dishes invariably do) a deal of thought—as much labour of brain as it did Jupiter when Minerva issued from his head. Of another quite recent production—a savoury mattyas with new combinations, one of our poets who supped on it has done me the honour to record in elegant verse that had he as many mouths as Fame, and hands as Briareus, he would desire no better employment than to pick such another in pieces. But it is by my rose-dish—my *rhodonia*—or, as I call it, the synthesis of all the resources of our art, that I hope to reach posterity: this is a dish which not only enlists the tongue, the palate, and the stomach of everybody in its praise, but causes moreover such an ineffable sweetness to proceed from each guest who has partaken of it, that he exhales a fragrance as strong as though he wore a chaplet of roses round his brow. My rhodonia requires for its complete success the petals of one particular kind of very fragrant rose, which, when in full blossom, I proceed to incorporate with the other elements of the dish, viz. equal parts of pigs' and turkeys' brains, delicately parboiled; yolks of eggs, garum, choice wine, and various aromatic spices; the whole is then heated (in order to preserve the sensible qualities of the rose-petals unimpaired) over a very gentle fire; and when it is first uncovered at table I can compare the sweet smell which immediately fills the room to nothing so aptly as to that diffusive fragrance which Homer declares to exhale from Juno's body when she rises from her celestial bath;

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parts of the globe. He further relates, that while the philosophic host was descanting upon these outworks, the hungry guests, losing patience and manners, carried the walls by assault, and then demolished and sacked all the good things which they found in the interior.

When winds perfumed the balmy gale convey
Through heaven, through earth, and all th'ethereal way;
The scent so strong, its piercing fragrance greets
The sense of gods with more than mortal sweets.*

And here, as I am talking of novelties, I may, I believe, add without fear of contradiction, that I turn out as good nuptial, fancy, and funeral banquets as any in Athens, in which I always take care to introduce some pleasing variety: in the latter more especially, as the occasions of them are solemn, I do my utmost to convert gloom into hilarity, and to reconcile heirs to their inheritance by my fresh surprises in soups and sauces; thus, when I had, by order of his nephew, prepared a supper to the memory of that excellent magistrate A**, the assembled guests (for he was a very popular man) wore faces long as their funeral robes, and sat down grave as a party of bears, and red-eyed as weasels: but this unpromising state of things lasted only a few minutes. No sooner were all the couches filled, and the covers at a signal removed, than everybody's face underwent an instant change: the steam from the dishes dried every eye, and set every tongue gaily on the wag; the party, absorbed in 'the dishes,' forgot the motive of its being assembled, and I had shortly the pleasure of hearing several say it was the finest and most novel wedding feast (and so truly it *was*) they had ever sat down to; it cost me a month's thought and a week's execution, and whilst in preparation, I was in continual danger of being prosecuted as a nuisance, or

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* Sicilian cooks were particularly famed for making their dishes fragrant:

'On the light wing of Zephyr that thitherward blows
What a dainty perfume has invaded my nose!
And sure in yon copse, if we carefully look,
Dwells some dealer in scents, or Sicilian cook!'

Cratinus.

taken up as a Siren; the circumstances were these: people in the street could not pass my laboratory for the delicious scents that steamed out from it; business and pleasure alike enchanted stood fixed before the door—there was no thoroughfare—the order to 'move on' had no effect—the crowd only increased, our premises were like a hive with a swarm of citizens all round.' 'And how did they get away then?' 'You may well ask the question, but necessity invents means not at first apparent. You remember how Ulysses escaped the Siren-song by stopping his ears with cotton: just so here; men's friends from a distance, guessing their plight from our neighbourhood, rushed manfully to the rescue, and, stopping both nostrils with the left hand, extricated them by means of the right from their savoury magnetic thraldom.'

'Have you gone through the whole duty of cooks?' 'Not entirely; for what is knowledge kept to oneself (as Thembryon, our great coryphaeus, was wont to say) but useless as a miser's gold or a prude's beauty? The real cook is careful to impart his advantages to others; he takes pupils, does not refuse a consultation out-of-doors when asked for advice, and finally gives lectures. As to pupils, some instruct more, some less: I have turned out a good many; but there are seven whom I call my seven wise men, and of them I am especially proud. One is a Rhodian, called Agis, the best man for cooking fish (ἄκρως) to a turn now in Athens, or perhaps anywhere; Nereus, another fish-cook, is equally excellent, though juvenile; he undertakes about twenty species at present, but being a young man of considerable ability, will, I doubt not, if he live, become an ornament to this branch of the profession. Death carried off poor Technon, who was quite equal to Agis, and I go and drop a tear occasionally over the noble apopyrus (funeral mound) of fish-bones which his friend Charinus erected to his memory. For yellow dishes (curries?) Chariades is

without a rival; Zamos rests his fame on a black sauce (beurre noir?); the white sauce (à la poulette?) of a sixth pupil has already brought him into notice; and my last the other day got immense *κῦδος* and a place in the family of a nobleman, who had witnessed his extraordinary feat of serving a large pig at table, one half of which was roasted, and the other boiled; the most wonderful part of the whole being that though the porker was stuffed with a farcie of whole birds and fish, there was no discernible trace of a suture, nor any other apparent means by which they had been introduced. All these young men have been trained to their profession under my own immediate eye at home; but the advantages accruing from my acquirements are felt out-of-doors as well: I am often stopped in the street for advice: either it is a stew that has been deluged in sauce, a scarus poisoned with allspice, or some principal dish in the second course gone wrong, and what's to be done? The other day I was summoned in breathless haste into a kitchen by a poor fellow who had roasted all the juices out of a pig till it was as dry as a board; this misfortune had taken away his wits, but they were instantly restored on my telling him the case was not without remedy, but *ἴάσιμον*, provided no time was lost in plunging the burnt carcase, while still hot, into a bath of sauce proper for it. I stood by whilst he did so, and soon left the pig filling his skin, and the youth in transports of gratitude.'* 'We need not prolong our colloquy, my friend.

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* Pigs appear to have been favourite subjects for experiments in Greek and Roman kitchens. 'A vast swine was then brought in cooked as the boar had been. 'Ha!' cried Lentulus rising from his couch, in order to inspect it more closely, 'I really believe that the cook has forgotten to disembowel the animal. Bring him hither directly.' The cook appeared with troubled mien, and confessed, to the indignation of the whole party, in his hurry he had forgotten to cleanse the beast. 'Now really,' said the enraged Cæ-

Μέγας εἰς τεχνίτης. I have heard sufficient to convince me of your ability.' 'And yet, sir, how little can you know of one who has never yet cooked you a single dinner: *ἀγνοεῖς πρὸς ὃν λαλεῖς.*' 'Never mind, I intend you to cook me many; come at once, and you shall have a salary equal to your merits.'

The Greek cook, however, had his faults; he was, as we have just seen, an immense talker, and, it must be added, without any regard for truth; he was moreover pedantic* and impertinent when addressed, would only afford his services on certain conditions and to certain persons,† was accused of constant peculation, and of cat-

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chinus, 'that is the most worthless slave I ever beheld: who ever heard of a cook omitting to gut a swine! Were he mine, I would hang him!' Lentulus, however, was more leniently disposed: 'You deserve a severe chastisement,' said he to the slave, 'and may thank my good-humour for escaping it; but as a punishment you must immediately perform the neglected duty.' In our presence the cook seized the knife, and having carefully slit open the belly on both sides, gave a sudden jerk, when, to the agreeable surprise of the guests, a quantity of little sausages of all kinds tumbled out.'—*Becker's Gallus.*

* Athenæus introduces us to a male sphinx, as his master facetiously calls him (but not to his face), who, in place of taking his plain orders for dinner, does nothing but pun and quote Homer, to show his parts. The poor master, who can get nothing but rhetoric and belles lettres for dinner, reminds us in his reasonable but useless expostulation, of the complaint addressed by the *bon homme* in Molière's 'Précieuses Ridicules' to his sisters, when they wish him to turn off a cook merely because he is illiterate:

> Que m'importe qu'il manque aux lois de Vauglas,
> Pourvu qu'à la cuisine il ne manque pas?
> J'aime mieux, pour moi, qu'en épluchant ses herbes,
> Il accorde mal les noms avec les verbes;
> Qu'il dise cent fois un bas et méchant mot,
> Que de brûler ma viande ou salir trop mon pot.

† Some kept a memorandum-book, *à la* Gil Blas, on whom to wait, and on whom not; all the wealthy, especially if they were

ing up everything in his keeping, even to the charcoal; he was capable, too, of entertaining a grudge against his employer, and when huffed of devoting him remorselessly to the vengeance of the gods, as we read in Menander:

A cook incensed, no weapon needs to wield,
The blameless man avenging gods shall shield.*

The conceit and claims to consideration of these gen-

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young heirs, as also rich strangers on a visit to the capital, met with prompt attention; whilst prudent, sparing, and *speering* housekeepers, on the other hand, who asked for estimates, or presumed to invade the mysteries of his *bona dea*, the kitchen, were no doubt entered in his black book with an ominous black O before their names, to poison, or to have nothing to do with.

* *Vulnerati, non cieli*, is the motto of the body at present in London, incorporated under the first James. French cooks, equally irascible, preferred going to *law*, as appears from the amusing anecdote appended by Brossette to one of Boileau's satires, in which occurs the following sally, with its result:—

Ma foi, vive Mignot et tout ce qu'il apprête,
Les chevaux cependant me dressoient à la tête;
Car Mignot c'est tout dire, et dans le monde entier
Jamais empoisonneur ne sut mieux son métier.

'Jacques Mignot, pâtissier traiteur, avoit la charge de maître-gueux de la maison du roi, et celle d'écuyer de la bouche de la reine: aussi il crut qu'il étoit de son honneur de ne pas souffrir qu'on traitât d'empoisonneur un officier comme lui. Il donna sa plainte à M. Defita, lieutenant-criminel, contre l'auteur des satires; mais ni ce magistrat, ni M. de Riants, procureur du roi, ne voulurent recevoir la plainte de Mignot; ils le renvoyèrent, en disant que l'injure dont il se plaignit n'étoit qu'une plaisanterie dont il devoit rire tout le premier. Cette raison, bien loin de l'apaiser, ne fit qu'irriter sa colère; et voyant qu'il ne pouvoit espérer de satisfaction par la voie de la justice, il résolut de se faire justice lui-même. Mignot avoit la réputation de faire d'excellens biscuits, et tout Paris en envoyoit quérir chez lui. Il sut que l'abbé Cotin avoit fait une satire contre M. Despréaux, leur ennemi commun. Mignot la fit imprimer à ses dépens; et quand on venoit acheter des biscuits, il les enveloppoit dans la

try were unbounded: tracing a direct descent from Cadmus, who it seems was a 'chef' in his day, they pretended the world had been regenerated by their means, that the moral code had ever marched *pari passu* with the culinary, and where there was no cooking, society, civilization, or virtue could not possibly subsist. Man, according to one of these too partial expositors of his art, was at first a savage and a cannibal, whose spit, fleshed, not with joints of mutton, but of man, never gyrated with sucking pig, but very often with sucking babes. From this wretched state, successive trials of various vicarious four-footed roasts gradually emancipated him, and after blessing the immortals in sacrifice for this discovery, that his enjoyment might be complete, he next turned his attention to sheep and bullocks, and passed into the pastoral state. As a shepherd, he remained some time—more harmless and inoffensive certainly, but not much more civilized than before, till the gods at last favoured him with the discovery of the kitchen uses of *salt;* from that period cookery might properly be said to commence, whilst social progress soon evinced itself in various defensive and offensive combinations: houses now were built in clusters, with walls and ramparts to surround and secure them; hamlets increased to towns, towns swelled into cities, cities grew into states; each state made its own laws, and zealously defended them; pa-

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feuille qui contenoit la satire imprimée, afin de la répandre dans le public, associant ainsi ses talens à ceux de l'abbé Cotin. Quand M. Despréaux vouloit se réjouir avec ses amis, il envoyoit acheter des biscuits chez Mignot, pour avoir la satire de Cotin. Cependant la colère de Mignot s'apaisa, quand il vit que la satire de M. Despréaux, bien loin de le décrier, comme il le craignoit, l'avoit rendu extrêmement célèbre. En effet, depuis ce temps-là tout le monde vouloit aller chez lui. Mignot a gagné du bien dans sa profession, et il fait gloire d'avouer qu'il doit sa fortune à M. Despréaux.'

triotism and every virtue of civil and domestic life developed fast: and this amelioration was effected by the spread and progress of cookery!* Some even carried their arrogance to the pitch of declaring, like Menecrates, the 'medical Jove' of his day, that cooks were the sole arbiters of the health and happiness of the whole human race.†

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* Juvenal, tracing the origin and progress of society, attributes to *mind* what is here set down to the score of well-cooked meat.

> The common Parent, when the world began,
> To all gave life, but mind alone to man;
> That ties of love reciprocal might lead
> To mutual offices in mutual need;
> To walk together on life's common way,
> And give tomorrow what we ask today;
> That man might quit the forest and the grove,
> Nor o'er the worlds in lawless wanderings rove;
> But seek the threshold of their powers conjoin'd
> The common weal of all on each to bind;
> To rush to arms, and rally at the note
> Of the hoarse trumpet's war-denouncing throat,
> On the same terms to perish or be free,
> And close the barrier with a common key.

† This Sicilian physician, who raised the iatric art, in his own person and esteem, much higher than it has since aspired, addressed the following note to Philip:—'Thou art King of Macedon,—I, of Medicine: thou canst kill men as many as thou pleasest, I can cure and save them with equal readiness. Thy bodyguard is small, and paid; mine consists of unnumbered votaries, whom I, Jupiter, have brought into or kept in being.' Philip's retort to this was excellent, and ran briefly thus: 'Philip to Menecrates, Health!'

CHAPTER XXII.

OPSOPHIAGY (CONTINUED).

PARASITES.

Oh! your parasite
Is a most gracious thing dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongst clods and clodpolls here on earth;
I muse the mystery was not more a science,
It is so liberally professt.—*Ben Jonson.*

Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune.—*Shakspeare.*

Σχεδόθεν δὲ οἱ ἦν παράσιτος
χαιρεφόων, πεινῶντι λάρῳ ὄρνιθι ἐοικὼς
Νηστὴς, ἀλλοτρίων εὖ εἰδὼς δειπνοσυνάων.
Mat. parod.

THE word *parasite* is now associated in the mind with objects only vile or mean; the lowest plants, the most revolting species of insects, and the most despicable characters possess this name in common; yet the word originally was so far from conveying a slur, or being a term of reproach, that a Greek gentleman might have been proud to affix it to his card, as a badge of honour and distinction. In correspondence with the respectability of the title, the first parasites, like the first Jesuits, were 'time-servers' in a good sense,* and 'all ho-

* The word time-server, scarce two centuries back, was used in a good sense, says Trench in his charming little work on the use of words, as a man who serves the times, accommodating himself to them, not them to himself.

nourable men;' in repute alike for their learning and integrity, and holding situations of trust in church and state. For a considerable period, some of the body were associated with the highest functionaries of the Government, two being assigned to the minister for the home department, and one to the πολέμαρχος, or minister of war, with salary, and a table well furnished, especially with fish found them by the state. So honourable was the profession, and so implicit the trust reposed in its members by the citizens at large, that a certain sacred granary, called Parasitium, filled with corn for the service of the gods, was placed under its immediate custody and control; nor were the parasites less studious on their sides to do justice to the high trust thus reposed in them; and it was no unusual thing, in the better days of the craft, to read mural inscriptions in the temples, commemorative of public services rendered by certain of its representatives, for which they had obtained, in company with some patriotic prætor, the like civic acknowledgment of a crown of gold. The perquisites of the body, exclusive of the usual 'honoraire,' must have been considerable, since it received by right of office one-third of the oxen immolated in honour of Castor and Pollux, besides sundry good pickings from many other sacrifices as well. At what period of its history, parasitism, still retaining the name, changed its import, and its honourable and much honoured professors began first to lose credit with the body politic, till they gave up the key of the Parasitium, and ceased to cater for the gods, is unknown; as is also the precise time when, having ceased to 'suck advantage' out of the state, the hungry tribe sank yet lower in public estimation, and fastened its fangs on wealthy individuals, and became the toadies and sycophants at great men's tables. But though the olympiad when these 'fools of fortune' began to corrupt their ways is unknown, the obvious source of their malpractices, the

'fons et origo mali,' must, we think, be ascribed to that over-luxurious living, which arose out of the too liberal provision made by the state to secure their good conduct. A Greek physician, looking upon the human stomach with the eye of a physiologist merely, has called it, somewhat quaintly, the house of Pluto, intimating thereby that it is the seat at once of the pleasures and penalties of life: the same organ, in the view of a Greek moralist, is the spring of every man's corruption, and the grand agent in his fall: and without implicitly adopting either of these statements, most men, it is to be feared, who should examine this 'horse-leech's daughter' of theirs attentively, would not fail to see that they are possessed of an organ which requires both much moral and medical watching. But to the operation of whatever sinister influence other men might owe their downfall, the parasite's temptation was certainly gastric, and proved too much for his virtue. Matelotte fishes, chine of beef *à la mode*, and fine wheat-bread *à discretion*, prevailed eventually against the very virtues which they had been given to foster and reward. It was doubtless a sad moral change and debasement, to pass thus from patriotism to peculation—from the enjoyment of a good name to the possession of a very bad one—from the odour of sanctity to that of osmazome—all to gratify a worthless viscus, ὃς *ἐσθίει οὐ κατὰ κόσμον*; but as Camoens pleads for the amatory weaknesses of his hero Fernando, by putting it to the reader's candour whether he be not conscious of having himself given way to like errors, we would subject the parasite's sad case to the same impartial tribunal, and, mutatis mutandis, exhort, in his translator's words,

All who have known the dear delusive art,
By which Culina mollifies the heart,
In pity to relent the brow severe,
And o'er a brother's weakness drop the tear.

As parasitism first flourished in Greece, so its later triumphs, when the sole meaning of the word was that of living at another man's board,* were principally confined to her sons.

> That land of treason, Pegasus, and lies,
> Bred and sent forth these villains in disguise.

Toadies indeed were characters familiar enough at Rome, but then they were mostly Achæan importations, and, debased and pretextatized as the Imperial city had become in Juvenal's time, no Roman was a match for them.

> Prompt to discern, and swift to seize his time,
> Your *Greek* stands forth in impudence sublime!
> Yield, yield the palm! he must outrun thee far
> Who makes another's mood his ruling star;
> Is all he wills to be, by night or day,
> Nor fears one honest feature will betray.
> All Greeks are actors, every one imbued
> With plastic powers o'er every human mood;
> Laugh, and his sides shake twice as long as yours,
> Weep, and what agony his soul endures!
> He'll sweat in simple complaisance to you,
> And when you 're cold, he clings to his surtout!
> In festive hours you happen to transgress,
> He swears he would not like one hiccup less;
> You belch with grace,† and, not to do you wrong,
> He never knew a man—half so strong.‡

The above, as we shall see, is very much the character of a Grecian parasite as drawn by himself. Terence pre-

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* Latinè, 'aliena vivere quadra,' literally, to live 'on another's four-barred bread,' or cross-bun; sometimes the divisions marked in the loaf were eight, when it was called in Greece, *ὀκτο-βλωμὸς*.

† 'Monsieur, vous toussez à merveille!' says a young intriguante in Molière, to an old gentleman whom she wishes to marry in spite of his age and asthma.

‡ Badham's Juvenal.

sents us, in the 'Eunuchus,' with one of these gentlemen, who (spite of his pure Latinity) is a thorough Greek. Parasite Gnatho, having explained to a ruined spendthrift (a quondam acquaintance, as he informs the *house*), and enlightened both him and it touching the resources of a rascality yet untried by that unfortunate, ends his confidential communication to the public somewhat as follows: —'While thus chatting together, we enter the market, when immediately a whole host of radiant faces comes forward to greet me,—confectioners, cooks, butchers, poulterers, sausage-sellers, and dealers in fish,—men whom I have it in my power, and do my best, as they know, to serve;—nothing could exceed the heartiness of these good people, who all vied with each other in paying us honour and pressing me to sup with them. My poor starveling friend, who had kept close, witnessing this, and seeing what an easy life was mine, begged hard that I would impart to him instructions in the art: I acceded with my usual kindness to his request, and, remembering the custom which prevails with philosophers of giving their names to disciples, made him a present of mine, and bade him henceforth call and consider himself a *Gnathonist*.'

As we went lately to Greece for the character of a cook, we now, and for the same reason, return thither to make further inquiries about these parasites. The first thing we remark about the tribe is the number of different names by which it was designated: besides the more generic title of *κόλαξ*,*([1]) with the numerous compounds([2]) made from it, the several members of this dis-

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* ([1]) Κόλαξ, from *κολλᾶσθαι*, to stick to, says Androcides; or from *κόλον*, alimentum, say others: neither of these *on dits* seems worthy of credit. ([2]) *ψωμοκόλαξ*, *μαλακόλαξ*, *διονυσιοκόλαξ*. ([3]) *παραγκονιστὴς*. ([4]) *θὴρ*. ([5]) *σχηματοθήκης*. ([6]) Τὸ *σπέρμα τῶν ἐλλογίμων κολάκων*. ([7]) Τὸ *γὰρ κολακεύειν νῦν ἀρέσκειν ὄνομ' ἔχει*.

reputable calling were known by many other aliases,—as, a wedge, elbow-friend,(3) a wild beast,(4) a double,(5) a cupping-glass, etc. Sometimes the race were called collectively *μυῖαι*, or flies, because they would go uninvited to a feast, and even when repulsed soon find their way back again to the board; sometimes, from sticking close to an eminent personage's side at supper, or from gliding in like his shadow, they were called (*σκιαὶ*) shades; *ζωμὸς*, sauce, was another designation for them, because they appeared with the garum and other sauces put on the table preparatory to the feast, and before any other guest had arrived; and finally Myconians,* because this people were so poor that their poverty, if not their will, obliged them to toady somebody to procure a subsistence.

Though the trade of chicanery was carried on briskly enough throughout Greece, and Athens was a great emporium for it; Salamis seems to have been the original and chief mart for toadies and toadyism, whence all the rest of the world was content to derive its supplies; here there were two recognized and distinct orders of parasites, the Gerginians and Promalanges: the business of the first was to pick up all the news they could collect at public places, and that of the other to sift and select such parts only as were most likely to be popular and pay. These last acquired such celebrity in the knowledge of wheedling, as to be called parasite, or toad-spawn.(6) As it would have been highly improper if this act of pleasing, as its professors were pleased to call it,(7) had been exclusively left to the male sex, neither was it; the gentler gender, whose forte at once and foible it is to please,

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(3) *κλίμακα κατεσκεύαζον ἐξ ἑαυτῶν οὕτως, ὥστε ἐπὶ τοῖς νώτοις αὐτῶν τὴν ἀνάβασιν γίγνεσθαι καὶ τὴν κατάβασιν ταῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἁμαξῶν ὀχουμέναις.*

* Pericles censured Archilochus for being a Myconian, intending thereby a parasite.

practised it extensively, and there was one eminent class of these female flatterers in particular called lady-ladders (climacides), whose office it was to bend their backs for patronesses to mount, on stepping in and out of their carriages. (8)

To be all things to all men, that every man might be all things to him, was, in what might be called the second stage of his development, the parasite's leading idea and prime business: there was nothing, therefore, to be either said or done, for the sake of a *deipnon*, at which he would stick. He was a man of strong stomach, but weak conscience; and one of the corps had the effrontery and irreverence to boast that he was in his conduct only a careful imitator of Jupiter, who, whenever he smelt savoury meat, or saw an open door and a table spread within, would invite and make himself welcome, and after supper leave the board without ever remembering to pay his share of the reckoning. 'Don't be hard, my dear young friend, upon us poor parasites,' deprecatingly whines another of the body; 'we are indeed a much-enduring race: small returns for great labours—such is our lot; no dinner one day, and if we feast on the morrow we are too glad on the third to pick the bones of yesterday's glaucus, cold and alone.' 'Cloudy and brief is our career,' says a fourth sentimentalist of the same school; 'age is slow in admitting our advances, and youth treats us with its characteristic levity and fickleness: thus neglected on all hands, our fate is often that of the vernal flowers we emulate—a premature decay and withering, for sheer want of a proper pabulum and something to moisten our insides.' 'Who,' asks a fifth well-fed gentleman of this versatile fraternity,—'who so full of expedients as we are? would one of us dine out uninvited, he has only to go, in the character of a 'fly,' and if repulsed from table and forced to run for it, he can leap over a wall like a locust: see too how accommodating we can be; I, for instance, though

certainly no water-drinker by choice, can, if necessary, and my entertainer be hydrophilously disposed, transmute myself instantly into a frog; or if he be fond (nasty fellow!) of cabbages, I can help him to demolish them like a caterpillar or snail. Is there an early errand to be run? behold me in my shirt-sleeves, bare-legged as a crane, ready to start at any moment. Is my dinner served me under a hedge in December? blithe as any blackbird, I eat it carolling. Am I called on to expose my bald unprotected pate to a midsummer sun? see me then, in apparent enjoyment of the glare, basking like a lizard on a baked wall. Or is my patron sleepless, yet tired of being read to? I can in such a case sit by his side, broad awake as an owl, and never blink once the night through. All friends have foibles, which it is a parasite's duty to pass over; some who call and consider themselves mine, provide me neither ointment, garum, nor soap. Here I content myself with these reflections, that the first, had it been provided, might have turned out rancid; that the omission of garum may have been only an oversight, for which I shall have more than an equivalent at dinner; and as for soap, that he has learnt mighty little philosophy who cannot defer the ceremony of washing for a single day. Such little solecisms in taste as these, never break the friendly relations which subsist between me and a wealthy host: the very same day sometimes sees me at his table, coaxing churlish, and reconciling angry guests; or, if an *enlèvement* be on the tapis, generously offering myself either as a battering ram to stave in the door of some refractory belle, or else, like a Capaneus, to plant a scaling-ladder against her window; or should the fair require cajolery rather than force to subdue her scruples, I am the smoke* her ad-

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* Smoke was supposed to follow the prettiest girl of a party, or, as the French proverb says, 'La fumée cherche les beaux.'

mirers send after her; then you shall see me fawning as a spaniel, supple as a belt, soft as a wash-leather, deep as a well; yet pliant and yielding as I appear in the service of a friend, or friend's friend, I can also, when their interests demand it, assume a very different character: sweep away foes like a whirlwind; scathe them as a flash of lightning; or, like an earthquake, bring down their house about their ears. I stick at nothing to serve an ally, but am, as occasion may require, a bully, a perjurer, a truce-breaker, or an assassin: a friend commands every one of my members and senses, and I place tongue, teeth, hands, and feet, as well as my head, entirely at his disposal.' Such rascally disclosures as the above we might certainly have expected from any esurient Greek; but that all Athens should turn parasite, and as one man debase itself by the worship, not of an 'unknown God,' but of a well-known licentious man of blood, and honour him in the sublime language of the prophets and psalms, is startling, and not what we should have predicted. Yet Democharcs informs us, that the Athenians received Demetrius, when he came from Leucadia and Corcyra to Athens, not only with frankincense, crowns, and libations, but even went out to meet him with ithyphallic hymns, choruses, and chanted as they moved in slow procession, that he was the only true God, and that all the others were either asleep or on a journey, or peradventure were not; they invoked him as the son of Neptune and Venus, and then falling down on their faces worshiped him.* One of these ithyphallic hymns is yet extant, and from it we make the following extract.

How noble doth he look! his friends around,
Himself the centre:

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* Ὡς εἴη μόνος Θεὸς ἀληθινὸς, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι καθεύδουσιν, ἢ ἀποδημοῦσιν ἢ οὐκ εἰσίν· γεγονὼς δ' εἴη ἐκ Ποσειδῶνος καὶ Ἀφροδίτης, δεόμενοι δ' αὐτοῦ ἱκέτευον, φησὶ, καὶ προσηύχοντο.—*Democharcs.*

His friends resemble the bright lesser stars,
Himself is Phœbus.
Hail, ever-mighty Neptune's mightier son!*
Hail, son of Venus!
For other gods do at a distance keep,
Or have no ears,
Or no existence; and they heed not us;
But you are present,
Not made of wood or stone, a genuine god:
We pray to thee.
First of all give us peace, O dearest God,
For you are Lord of peace.†

Such words, says Athenæus, were sung at home and abroad by men whose sires had fought at Marathon, slain countless hosts of barbarians, and once put a man to death for offering adoration to a Persian despot; so gross was the flattery, that even the recipient himself could not stomach it, but declared his vexation and astonishment at what he heard and saw, together with his conviction that there was not one Athenian of free and manly spirit left.

Ancient Festivities.

Δεῖπνά μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροφα, καὶ μάλα πολλὰ,
Ἃ Ξενοκλῆς ῥήτωρ ἐν Ἀθήναις δείπνισεν ἡμᾶς.—Matron. par.

Of beast, bird, or fish, and every daintiest thing,
That feast, O Muse, in grateful accent sing,

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* *Ὦ τοῦ κρατίστου παῖ Ποσειδῶνος Θεοῦ,*
χαῖρε, κ' Ἀφροδίτης.
Ἄλλοι μὲν ἢ μακρὰν γὰρ ἀπέχουσιν Θεοὶ,
ἢ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὦτα,
ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἢ οὐ προσέχουσιν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ ἕν·
σὲ δὲ παρόνθ' ὁρῶμεν·
οὐ ξύλινον, οὐδὲ λίθινον, ἀλλ' ἀληθινόν,
εὐχόμεσθα δή σοι·
πρῶτον μὲν, εἰρήνην ποίησον, φίλτατε·
κύριος γὰρ εἶ σύ. κ. τ. λ.

† C. D. Yonge, trans. of Athen.

Which Rhetor Stratocles at Athens gave,
To doughty polemarchs and archons grave,
On which ourself, with many a hungry guest.
Laid instant hands, and bravely did our best.

It is not easy to convey to others a precise idea of either a battle, ball, or supper, in which they were not personally engaged: thoroughly to apprehend such things, we must ourselves have stood up to the fight or dance, and sat down to the feast; or, if we have taken no active part, have been bodily present at least during the proceedings. In spite therefore of the very elaborate accounts which ofttimes find their way into the papers, of great private entertainments and civic dinners, the 'constant reader' will often find himself wholly unable to wind his way through the Daedalean mazes of a modern bill of fare, and be forced to confess, as he puts down the savoury and lengthy announcement with a sigh, that he is not much wiser for the perusal.

But if the most elaborate description of a modern dinner, embracing the city Mason's last triumphs, with the service and pomp, the toasts and table-talk of the assembled guests, seldom, if ever, satisfies public curiosity entirely, (though fed on this careful *réchauffé* the very day after the feast,) how much less likely is it to be appeased in an inquiry touching entertainments given nearly two thousand years ago—not in our own Guildhall, but in the far-distant saloons of Roman or Athenian citizens, long before the invention of printing, and when newspapers and reporters were luxuries as yet undreamt of! Had any ancient frescoes, indeed, (similar in design to the gorgeous and dazzling suppers, the pride of the Venetian school,) been spared to our day; as such pageants are certainly amongst those which 'require the pencil, but defy the pen,' we should probably, in spite of the lapse of so many ages, have learned more from one such picture than from any verbal descriptions; but as this un-

fortunately is not the case, we are fain to seek for information from the only other source open to us, viz. from the guests themselves; and here, how little we should have learned, had all been of the same spirit with one *bon vivant*, who puts himself forward as a Clearchus for others, will be the best gathered from his own words. 'When,' observes this adept connoisseur of the school of Athens, 'anybody invites me to *deipnon*, it is by no means my practice, though they tell me it shows *ton* to stand gaping at columns, statues, busts, candelabra, couches, or the other furniture of the banquet-room:

> For all these things, however fine,
> Won't stay a stomach come to dine.*

I am there in the service of my teeth; and, to employ my eyes profitably in their behalf, endeavour to find out some spot whence my oracle, the kitchen chimney, may be conveniently consulted: when I see thence an impetuous black torrent of smoke pouring continuously, as from a volcano, by a large mouth, and soaring majestically aloft in a swift, straight, dense, unbroken, and voluminous column, that augurs well, for 'coming events cast their shadows before;' much smoke implies corresponding fuel, and fuel we know is not consumed for nothing; large preparations are then making in the kitchen, and I gasterize† myself at the anticipation of so much good cheer; but if I observe, in place of a towering pillar rising to the sky, a pale, feeble, and fitful jet of no dimensions, creeping out from a penurious vent, and scarcely escaped before it is whirled away and dispersed by the first puff of air, then I give my hopes at once to the

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* Ὄψιν μὲν ἔχει τὰ τοιαύτα ποικίλην
Ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἐστὶ τοῦτο πρὸς τὸν γαστέρα.

† Γαστρίζω, I stroke my stomach.
'He stroked up his belly and stroked down his band.'—*Gray.*

winds; my face, in spite of former experience of such liabilities, lengthens, and my lower jaw, as loth to communicate to myself within what is sure to follow, drops at the well-ascertained prospect of a meagre, bloodless repast.'

To persons so pledged and engrossed in the immediate business of the feast, it would never have occurred to collect details for the benefit of a distant posterity, and our curiosity must have remained accordingly without food to satisfy it, but for a certain sect of philosophers called 'deipnosophists,' or supper-sages, who used to make it part of the business of the entertainment to discuss every dish as it was placed before them, and further, to introduce into their colloquies all such topics as were immediately connected with or suggested by the banquet. From the very erudite researches of these dilettanti diners-out, many curious facts (the knowledge of which would otherwise have perished) have come down to us; and their savoury miscellany affords also so many lively bits of description, and dazzling glimpses of different feasts, as to enable the reader, by the light of their collated and joint coruscations, to form some idea of the synthetic splendour of a Greek banquet, just as, from broken columns and fragments of frieze, we conceive of the integral grandeur of a temple which has long since fallen to pieces, and left no other traces of its quondam magnificence and glory.

The first thing likely to impress the most careless peruser of the pages of Athenæus is the exceedingly bad use which the ancient world too often made of its good cheer, turning the pleasures of the table into the foulest excesses, and so overloading and goading the stomach, that at length it succumbed, like a weary pack-horse, and sank prematurely under a burden it could no longer carry. From this debasing vice of gluttony few, with the means of indulging it at hand, had the virtue to re-

frain; nor were philosophers and sages a whit wiser or better in this matter than the world at large; many of the wise men of those days teaching as well by precept as in practice, that pleasant living and gluttony were inseparably connected. 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die;' *ζῆν ἐστὶ τὸ τοιοῦθ', ὡς λέγουσιν οἱ σοφοὶ*. There were however some pleasing exceptions: Pythagoras was frugal in the use of flesh, and only gave great orders to the butcher on one memorable occasion worthy of it, viz. when he had proved to the latest posterity the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid.* Plato, barring his addiction to figs, which was reported quite to equal his love for philosophy, was 'temperate in all things.' 'Oh! Plato, you sup for tomorrow's enjoyment rather than today's,' says Timotheus. 'Lupins for food and chit-chat for side-dishes,' stand recommended on Lycophron's authority: and it is the sentiment of some one in Alexis's Lady Lover (*φιλοῦσα*) that enough was better than a feast;

> *Ἀλλ' ἔγωγε τοῦ τὰ δέοντ' ἔχειν*
> *Τὰ περιττὰ μισῶ·*

and Pyrrho the Elean tells a friend that he positively must decline dining with him unless the entertainment be simple and the dishes few, as all that is superfluous, says he, goes only to the servants' hall.† But temperate eaters in those days were very rare, and sometimes whole states distinguished themselves for gluttony in a world of gluttons: amongst these the Bœotians were conspicuous; so that the phrase, 'to eat like a Bœotian,' was

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* *Ἡνίκα Πυθαγόρης τὸ περικλεὲς εὕρατο γράμμα*
κλεινὸς, ἐφ' ᾧ κλεινὴν ἤγαγε βουθυσίην.—Apollodor. Arith.

† *Μᾶλλον, γὰρ ἡμᾶς τῇ μεθ' ἑαυτῶν συνουσίᾳ προσῆκόν ἐστιν εὐεργετεῖν, ἢ τῷ πλήθει τῶν παρατιθεμένων, ὧν οἱ διακονοῦντες τὰ πλεῖστα δαπανῶσι.*

as proverbial as 'to drink like a Scythian:' these people would eat without intermission day and night, boasting, that whereas 'the Athenians only talked and tasted, they ate and stuffed,' their whole converse being such as might be supposed to pass between over-full sacks of flour with their mouths open: viz. how much each could hold! The Thessalians gave suppers known as *Capanean* or cupboard suppers, from the quantity of victuals they used to stow away on such occasions. The Lydians performed great feats in gluttony, and were called the 'wide-mouth nation' in consequence: one of their voracious kings is reported to have eaten up all of his wife except her hand, which not being able to gorge, he afterwards killed himself, that the story might not get wind. Thus, though a temple was built to Voracitas (*ἀδηφαγία*) in Sicily, her worship was by no means localized, and she had proselytes in every part of the world. Amongst immortal gluttons, Hercules (*βουφάγος*) the beef-eater was chief; he would eat up the grilled carcase of a cow at a meal, with all the live coals attached to it; Ulysses' edacity is competently attested in the Odyssey; Milo carried an ox round the stadium in his arms, and then, with as little difficulty, in his inside; Astydamus of Miletus wagered to despatch a dinner prepared for nine persons, and was as good as his word. The notices of inferior gourmets, of Megarian trumpeters and Thracian boxers who ate, according to report, twenty pounds of beef, and drank two gallons of swill with it, and of ladies who, like Aglaïs, could eat twelve pounds, and take their gallon too, are still more numerous. Clearchus mentions one Persian Cantibaris, who having eaten till he could eat no longer, kept his mouth open like a young bird, to be stuffed by his servants; and a son of Myrmidon was called Æthon, because he devoured everything before him, like a consuming fire. The precepts of philosophers were in ac-

cordance with these examples: Epicurus (but we need not wonder at him) was wont to enunciate in a loud voice, *μεγάλῃ φωνῇ*, and even to bawl forth, *βόων λέγειν*, as what all must admit—that a man amerced of the pleasures of tongue as connected with taste, was hardly to be conceived capable of enjoyment; and to the same purpose, that the stomach was the source and tap-root (*ἀρχὴ καὶ ῥίζη*) of all the delights of life. One prayed that in his grief, which always took a hungry turn, he might never be without a good supper at hand to appease it;* whilst another of the same stye wished to die of repletion bursting with food.† Others again, greedy after some particular friandise (as Archesilaus after his grapes) were used to speculate, with Cicero, what, or if any pleasures could remain to a man who had lost the enjoyments of his palate. Sophocles puts a nearly similar sentiment into the mouth of one of his dramatic angels, who holds that an effete *bon virant* is no longer a man, but only (*ἔμψυχον νεκρὸν*) a living corpse. Several of the stories quoted in Athenæus profess the same views as Epicurus; and though the Cynics affected to snarl at this, as at other human weaknesses, it was only to vitiate the proverb which holds good of quadruped curs, and to bite not less furiously than they barked. 'Put a glaucus' head before any of these sages who stalk past with high-

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* Ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν δορπῆσαι ἐάσατε κηδόμενόν περ.
Ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ πένθος μὲν ἔχω φρεσίν· ἡ[1] δὲ μάλ' αἰεὶ
ἐσθέμεναι κέλεται καὶ πινέμεν, ἐκ δέ με πάντων,
ληθάνει ὅσσ' ἔπαθον, καὶ ἐνιπλησθῆναι ἀνώγει.

† Εὐδαίμων ἐγὼ οὐχ ὅτι
ἐν τοῖς γάμοισιν, ἄνδρες εὐωχήσομαι,
ἀλλ' ὅτι διαῤῥαγήσομ', ἂν θεὸς θέλῃ·
τούτου δέ μοι γένοιτο τοῦ θανάτου τυχεῖν.

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[1] (Sc. γαστὴρ.)

raised eyebrows and abstracted air, as immersed in lofty thought, and, as long as they find any remaining scraps to pull from the bones, you will be amazed and amused to see how entirely public teachers of sobriety can forget their own precepts.' Nor were the disciples a whit less greedy than their philosophical instructors:

> If, as Epicurus sings,
> All our joy from eating springs,
> Him will most enjoyment follow
> Who's widest mouth and longest swallow,

says one of them; following out which idea, another Epicurean sighs for an œsophagus *à la giraffe*, partly that he might thereby retard the progress of the food as it passed downward to his stomach, and partly because each savoury morsel having so many additional inches of pipe to traverse, the points of contact would be multiplied, and the pleasurable sensation diffused over a larger surface. After this, we need not wonder to find the vault of the palate, or epicure's heaven, designated (at a time when all the world were epicures) by the same word as the vault of the sky, both being called indifferently *οὐρανὸς*. As the pleasure of eating could not be prolonged by prolongation of the œsophagus, nor by any enlargement of the organs of taste, the earliest epicures sought to augment their gratification by bringing other members of the body to join sympathetically in the act, so that it was not the mouth only, but almost the whole man, that was engaged in eating. Hercules, the prince of gourmets, is represented at feeding-time as not only making full use of his teeth and a great noise with his lips, but also as swelling out and distorting both eyes and cheeks in an extraordinary manner: his nostrils snort, his ears rise up like those of a horse snuffing oats, or a rabbit munching cabbage; the corrugators of both brows contract, the scalp itself seems to move, and there is no

muscle of the neck, face, or shoulders, but what appears tumid and hard at work.

Gluttony and drunkenness, being both social vices, are in their nature necessarily contagious: of the two, however, the latter is decidedly the more dangerous and catching; for while in surfeiting, whether alone or in company, a man generally goes no further than his own individual greediness prompts; in drunkenness he is led on and solicited by others to keep them in countenance—every member of a board of topers being in league against sobriety, and each man putting the bottle before his neighbour, to encourage him in the abuse of strong drink. Opsophagy again was necessarily confined to the rich;* but the means of drunkenness have in all times been comparatively cheap and within the compass of every man's purse; and there has ever been this additional

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* Few men enjoyed the privilege of going 'tick' with the fishmonger, who, secure of a ready sale, did not encourage long bills; and even had they been complaisantly disposed, the *opsonomoi*, or comptrollers of the fish-market, would have interfered to prevent it. At Corinth, where the supervision was particularly strict, the law enacted that none should 'opsophagize' but such as could prove their income sufficient to support the extravagance; a poor offender was first cautioned, then muleted, and, if still incorrigible, handed over to the 'carnifex.' 'Do you know this excellent law of ours,' asks an overreached, disappointed Corinthian purveyor, of one these sharp-witted gentlemen whom he meets in the market; 'and have you weighed well the end of such pretenders? When abandoned by honest men and the state at large, they become the boon companions of sycophants, thieves, cut-throats, and other outcasts; from all of whom,' adds the excited man, 'may our city be quickly purged!' 'Amen!' says the party addressed, 'but why all this to me?' 'To you?' retorts the other, 'because you are the man! It is you who eat up all the supplies of our Agora; you who raise foreign wines to their present exorbitant price; you whose greediness suffers not one little fish to escape, *οὐκ ἐστὶν ἰχθυηρὸν ὑπὸ σοῦ μεταλαβεῖν*; you who make us fight for every cabbage at the greengrocer's, and

prestige in its favour, that whereas the glutton might sometimes munch and monophagize in solitude, leading the life of a wolf or of a lion,* those who drank generally drank together, and, as it was always said and supposed, to each other's health and prosperity. In Pagan times drunkenness was so general that it may be said to have been the world's epidemic: feebly opposed by moralists on the grounds of inexpediency, it was not to be restrained or put down by the legislature; for was not Bacchus—a god who would take vengeance on water-drinkers, 'siccis omnia nam dura Deus proposuit'—to be minded before men?† Whilst therefore the ancients knew and admitted all the practical inconveniences resulting from inebriety, few *felt* the degradation of a moral being like man, drinking away his reason and voluntarily debasing himself to the level of the brutes which have no understanding: and this was the reason that the good advice of sages was thrown away upon the public, who could not

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contend for each sprig of parsley, like so many competitors at the Isthmian games;[1] you who no sooner see a hare brought to market, than there you are, hovering like a hawk, ready to pounce upon it: show me partridge or quail that has a better chance, or anything with wings, from a peacock to a tit, safe from your infernal beak and talons; you have robbed our sky of all its larks and linnets, till it has become sad and silent as Avernus itself. Audacious villain! like some devouring locust, you find plenty, and leave famine in your rear.'

* Visceratio sine amico vita leonis et lupi est.—*Seneca.*

† Perhaps it was partly on account of the greater temptations to this offence, and partly in consequence of the greater difficulty of eradicating a sin which men first deified and then blindly worshiped, that made St. Paul charge Timothy to see, if a man desire the office of bishop or deacon, that he be not *πάροινος*, given to *excess in wine:* he does not in either instance specify gluttony, supposing, the greater victory gained, the lesser will follow naturally.

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[1] In which a crown of parsley was the victor's prize.

fail to observe the little weight attached by them to the rules they laid down, their 'brisk' bad example having more weight with the world than their cold vapid precepts of propriety.

Intemperance, like all other human corruptions, took time no doubt to develope and work, and for awhile men had a reverence for the social board * which forbade excess either in eating or drinking; but this sobriety did not last long; they began with 'a glass of innocent Lesbian wine,' but, passing by quick degrees from 'gay morality to easy vice,' soon came to drink like horses or Scythians;† and Bacchus, who under the epithet ὄρθιος was at first approached in a straight line and adored as an 'upright' god,‡ received at no very distant period worship from votaries doubled up under the table. At one time men found three cups enough, *i. e.* one for health, one for cheerfulness, and one to sleep upon; or, as some explained this mystical number, one for each of the three Graces; afterwards, in anticipation of the advice of Queen Anne's poet, with regard to a very different kind of *haustus*, guests seldom 'tasted' without 'drinking deep.' A mistress's name became an excuse for lovers to drink as many glasses as there were letters in her dear name: thus the allowance which gallantry prompted was 'for Nævia *six*, for sweet Justina *seven*,' (Nævia

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* A proper respect for the table seems to have been kept up for a time, from a belief that the 'Cœlicolæ' occasionally partook of the repast *incog.* as guests.

† We say, like a fish, which is still further from the truth; for to drink like a fish, is, in fact, to be more temperate than any member of the Temperance Society, and not to drink at all.

‡ Amphictyon, King of Athens, is reported to have learned the art of mixing water with wine from Bacchus, which, as it enabled him and others to go to the jolly god's altar walking in a straight line and in an upright posture (ὄρθιοι), gave origin to his name (ὄρθιος).

sex cyathis, septem Justina bibatur); so that if a lover chanced to have a betrothed with a very long *onomasia*, as some had, he could scarcely escape intoxication:—

> One pint, perhaps, he might have ta'en,
> Nor been much out of sorts;
> The rock, in geologic phrase,
> He split upon was—quartz!—*Hood.*

When the taste for deep drinking had become still more confirmed, men found not 'seven' only, but seventy, good reasons why their license should not be taken away: the casual mention of a friend's name at table (and this became one way of never forgetting one's friends) always led to a cup; and when the name of a god, goddess, or the king* turned up, the same ceremonial was repeated: the three Graces were still drank, but the nine Muses were no longer forgotten; and when once the wine-measure had been thus *squared*, the rate of increment became geometric; it was speedily cubed, and then carried on to the n^{th}!

The Tapyri used wine endermically, rubbing Bacchus into their system as we rub in Mercury;† and the Scythians, who never kept sober till the second course, used to saturate their garments after soaking their insides, and then roll and revel in the fumes like cats in a cupboard of valerian; 'synagogues' in Menander's day meant 'tippling' clubs; and Rome in the time of the Cæsars was the wine-shop of the world. Accounts are on record of Greek, Roman, and Barbarian drinking matches (all equally barbarian) which might pass belief were there any known limits to human vileness, con-

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* Two cyathi, to the health of the king, is a toast recorded by Antiphanes. The cyathus was a ladle for taking wine or liquid from a bowl; it was of as uncertain dimensions as our modern wine-glass, which is the medical cyathus, and a fair equivalent.

† Χρίσματα ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ὁ οἶνος ὥσπερ ἄλλοις τὸ ἔλαιον.

signed to its own misguidance: Tiberius Nero, or *Biberius Mero*, as he was jocosely called by his drinking friends, having assembled all the greatest drinkers of the day, proposed a prize for him who should swallow most wine at a standing; on which one of the Circean troop despatched three gallons at a pull, and so delighted the Emperor that he created him knight of the three gallons—*tricongarius*—on the spot. Alexander the Great, who died, not in the arms of Victory, but of Bacchus, had instituted similar rewards for the man who should carry away most liquor in hold: the first prize, which was a talent, fell to the lot of one Promachus, who drank off continuously four gallons of unmixed wine; the other prizes were not awarded, as thirty of the contenders died rhyton in hand, and six more afterwards in the tents—as both Ælian and Athenæus relate. Eumenes, king of Pergamus, was another *ἀῤῥυθμοπότης* who died drunk; and indeed, the loss of human life from hard drinking was so great in ancient days, that, had society been differently constituted, the obits of so many worthless members would have been a gain; as it was, so wide was the baneful practice spread, that if all had sunk under strong drink who were addicted to it, the world would have been unpeopled. Most of the poets were bibacious on principle; (Cratinus who is represented to have died on seeing wine leak from a hogshead) says that no verse written by water-drinkers is good for anything;* Homer, by his praises of wine, shows his love of boozing, and old Ennius would not sound his war-notes till he was drunk; Alcæus and Aristophanes also wrote under the same influence; and 'ever since Bac-

* Pindar's motto, *ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ*, seems to dissent from this, and to speak highly of water; but this may refer to its excellence for the purposes of washing, cooking, etc., and not for draught.

chus enrolled bards among satyrs and fauns, the sweet Muses have been somewhat vinous in the morning.' The sages were as bad as the poets; amongst those addicted to this immorality, Cato of Utica is particularly mentioned as passing whole nights *à la* Porson, not in emending Greek, but in fuddling his brain with Falernian. Philosopher Xenocrates got a gold crown from Dionysius for drinking a whole gallon, before him, at a single draught: and Philosopher Anacharsis, whilst entertained by Periander at Corinth, claimed the prize at a drinking-match for being drunk the first, saying *that* was the end proposed, and he consequently, as foremost at the goal, ought in fairness to carry away the cup. Plato may even be said to have given a rule for drunkenness, when at marriage feasts he particularly recommends the bride and bridegroom to keep from tippling, for the sake of the children, who ought to be begotten in sobriety, and especially by instructing us that it is incorrect, *οὐ πρέπει*, to be drunk except at the feast of the god who gave the wine. The excellent and moral Seneca thought that there were some griefs which nothing but deep drinking would drown: of course the removal of such sorrows would afford a pretext equally strong for flying to the wine-skin; and a remarkable instance of this occurs in the 'Antigone,' where the opening chorus, in a sublime address to the sun, as he is seen magnificently rising just after the departure of an invading army from before the wall of Thebes, winds up a lofty rhapsody by exhorting their fellow-citizens to go the round of all the temples in succession, but first to begin the morning's festivities by getting drunk. Such an insult offered in full quire to the God of Day, recalls a noble passage from one of Le Franc Pompignan's odes:

Le Nil a vu sur ses rivages
Les noirs habitans des déserts

Insulter par leurs cris sauvages
L'astre éclatant de l'univers.
Cris impuissans ! fureurs bizarres !
Tandis que ces monstres barbares
Poussaient d'insolens clameurs,
Le Dieu, poursuivant sa carrière,
Versait un torrent de lumière
Sur ses obscurs blasphémateurs !

All those guilty extravagancies which so lately disgraced our grandfathers' dining tables; those apple fights (*μηλομαχία*'s) and orange factions which were familiar to bachelor parties in days gone, let us hope, never to return, equally disturbed, no doubt, the festive boards of ancient Greece and Rome; and young Cicero, who is accused of having thrown a goblet at the head of Mark Antony, is only one lively original actor, in classic times, of a scene of as daily occurrence then as during the reign of Bacchus and the regency of George IV., alike among the sons of eminent statesmen and those of less dignified parentage. *Ἐκφέρεσθαι πότου*, subaudi *drunk*, is a phrase of which the English equivalent is well known; and since the action of wine upon the human brain must have been at all times the same, the vigorous lines in which Crabbe depicts the progress of temulency amongst a club of topers at the Red Lion of Aldborough, will apply equally to the orgies of a Roman convivium, of a Greek synagogue, or of a Bacchic festival any and everywhere:

Wine, like the rising sun, possession gains,
And drives the mist of dulness from the brains;
The gloomy vapour from the spirit flies,
And views of gaiety and gladness rise;
Still it proceeds, till from the glowing heat
The prudent calmly to their shades retreat.*
Then is the mind o'ercast: in wordy rage
And loud contention angry men engage;

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* Ἀλλὰ σὺ, ταῦτα
γινώσκων, μὴ πίν' οἶνον ὑπερβολάδην,

Then spleen and pique, like fireworks thrown in spite,
To mischief turn the pleasures of the night;
Anger abuses, malice loudly rails,
Revenge awakes, and anarchy prevails;
Till wine, that raised the tumult, makes it cease,
And maudlin love insists on instant peace.
He noisy mirth and roaring song commands,
Gives idle toasts, and joins unfriendly hands,
Till fuddled friendship vows esteem and weeps,
And jovial folly drinks, and sings, and sleeps.*

In the midst of the disgraceful excesses of our ancestors, their wives, our grandmothers, at least remained sober; but this unfortunately was not the case with the ancient dames of Greece and Rome, 'cum vino simul ebibuerunt imperium,' in drinking they lost all reverence of their lords' instructions. Phædrus' fable of the old woman smuffing an empty wine-cask, and finding some satisfaction even in the smell of the lees, is borne out as regards aged females by such proverbs as *anus ad armillum*—the hag and the hogshead; and 'they think but

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πρὶν μεθύειν ἄρξῃ δ', ἀπανίστασο· μή σε βιάσθω
γαστὴρ, ὥστε κακὸν λάτριν ἐφημέριον.—*Theognis.*

Now mind you this, my friend,
And don't indulge in drinking to excess,
But rise from table ere the wine begins
To take effect, nor let your appetite
Reduce you to become its daily slave.

Trans. by C. D. Yonge.

† So to the same purpose, in his 'Ulysses the Weaver:'

Φιλεῖ γὰρ ἡ μακρὰ συνουσία
καὶ τὰ συμπόσια τὰ πολλὰ τὴν καθ' ἡμέραν ποιεῖν
σκῶψιν· ἡ σκώψις δὲ λυπεῖ πλεῖον ἢ τέρπει πολύ·
τοῦ κακῶς λέγειν γὰρ ἀρχὴ γίνετ'· ἂν δ' εἴπῃς ἅπαξ,
εὐθὺς ἀντήκουσας, ἤδη λοιδορεῖσθαι λείπεται.
Εἶτα τύπτεσθαι δέδεικται καὶ παροινεῖν, ταῦτα γὰρ
κατὰ φύσιν πέφυκεν οὕτως· οὐ τὶ μάντεως ἔδει.

to drink;' while the yet more ungallant and sweeping censure, *γυναικὶ πιστεύε μὴ πίνειν ὕδωρ*, 'trust a woman not to drink water,' involves the whole sex. Indeed it was usual to say that the safest wife for a bachelor to choose would be a Scythian, because the vine did not grow in her country; but that, like many other *à priori* inferences, was not borne out experience. In pagan days the ladies everywhere seem to have determined upon enjoying a full share of wine, in spite of lords and masters who tried, but in vain, to defraud them of it. At Marseilles the women were compelled to drink water only. Athenæus and Theophrastus report similar coercive measures to have been adopted by the legislature of Miletus. At Rome the law was equally stringent. 'Anciently,' says Pliny, 'our dames were not allowed to drink wine; and it is recorded in the old chronicles that Ignatius Mecenius killed his wife outright with a cudgel, on surprising her in the act of tapping a cask; for which severe act of domestic discipline Romulus exempted him from punishment.' Fabricius Pictor relates in his annals that a woman of rank was actually starved to death by her kinsfolk for opening a blue-beard cupboard in which the keys of the wine-cellar lay; and Cato records that, to prevent the recurrence of such painful scenes, it was enacted that husbands (and in their absence the next of kin) should kiss the matrons daily, that it might appear, from the state of their breath, whether they had been drinking; a very inadequate precaution truly, for could not, and would not, these ladies soon learn to adopt Martial's advice to eaters of onions, and receive the salute of their trusty and well-beloved relations, *clauso ore*, with mouth shut? One magistrate (an unjust Creticus, no doubt) pronounced the following remarkable judgment against a Roman lady—'That whereas it appeared she had drunk more wine than was necessary for the preservation of health, and that without her husband's know-

ledge, therefore it is enacted that she do surrender and give up all her personal property, and also her dower.' We have no heart to pursue such calumnies any further;

> Muse, changeons de style et quittons la satire,
> C'est un méchant métier que celui de médire;

and we have, besides, a brief notice to give, before concluding, of a Greek and a Roman feast.

There were, from an early period, two different kinds of entertainments known in Greece, the one called *ἔρανος*, where the guests (*ἐρανισταὶ*) each furnished a quota of the charge;* though some, particularly poets and singers, were admitted gratuitously (*ἀσύμβολοι*), and were said, in consequence, to feast *ἄκαπνοι*, without smoke, *i. e.* without paying for the kitchen-fire. These repasts resembled in some respects the modern *table d'hôte* entertainment; and in common with it possessed the solid advantages of being at once frugal, sociable, and independent. They were at one time so prudently conducted as to have passed for schools of sobriety (*διδασκαλεῖα σωφροσύνης*), where the young might sit to learn lessons of moderation from the old, and observe much that was worthy of their imitation. The other kind was a banquet to which a host sent his *δειπνοκλήτωρ*, or chas-eur, with special invitations to those whom he proposed to feast at his own charge. This, unlike the last, soon became a riotous and ruinously expensive affair, not only on account of the exertions of the entertainer to furnish the best supplies in his power, but chiefly because his friends, making a very improper return for so much courtesy, swilled and guttled in wanton and wasteful excess,

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* Nearly akin to these were the *δεῖπνα ἀπὸ σπυρίδας*, or basket feasts; whereas

> . . . when Scarron his companions invited,
> Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united.
>
> *Goldsmith.*

and frequently laid their hands upon whatever could be carried off, like Frenchmen upon coffee-house sugar. Homer, who mentions both these modes of entertainment, represents Minerva as knowing at a glance, by the uproarious conduct of Penelope's suitors, that the feast at which they gambled and gorged was not an *ἔρανος*, or club feast, but an *εἰλαπίνη*, or supper, at the expense of another party.

> Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays,
> When for the dear delight another pays.*

The Greeks, in subsequent and more luxurious days than the heroic (when fish and fowl had been added to beef and mutton, and these meats were boiled, hashed, and stewed, as well as simply roasted), sat down sometimes to four meals a day:† observing, as to their times for eating, a correspondence rather with continental usage than our own. They appear to have begun the day with a sort of 'chittering crust,' or snatch before breakfast (*ἀκράτισμα*), taken immediately on rising; this consisted of a bit of bread sopped in wine, like the French auroral 'biscuit de Rheims' with a small cup of 'café noir;' the next meal (*ἄριστον*) was a late meat breakfast, or 'déjeûner à la fourchette,' and is said to be etymologically derived from *ἀριστάω*, to take pluck or courage, because after it men, in the pugnacious periods of the world, were wont to buckle on their armour and go into battle, where they were expected by the State to do their duty for that day at least on the strength of it. The third repast was the *ἑσπέρισμα*, or vesper meal, a kind of *goûté*, or early tea;‡ and lastly—before dinners were introduced ('dum in usum non erant prandia')—the

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* Pope. So Nicomachus says to the same purpose, *δείπνων δὲ πᾶς τ' ἀλλότρια γίνετ' ὀξύχειρι κ' οὐκ ἐγκρατὴς.*

† Isidorus.

‡ Suffolkcè bever, Norfolkcè fowes.

day's repasts closed with a supper or *δεῖπνον*, the principal meal, to which invitations were mostly, and our subsequent remarks will be wholly, confined.* A favourite time for giving these supper-parties was during the full moon; in Sparta, because, as neither servants nor links were allowed, it was unpleasant to go titubating home in the dark; and throughout Greece generally, because the doctors proclaimed that the moon, whose influence in softening lovers' hearts is well known, exercised the same mollifying control over *all* flesh, and so very materially assisted the peptic forces of the stomach. The *δεῖπνον*, in all its splendour and unurtailed proportions, consisted first of a proœmium, or prefatory course of good things, intended as whets to the appetite, and was followed, as with us, by two courses; the latter of which included half the dessert. The proœmium was a jumble of very different *hors d'œuvres*—a union of most of the things which at present make their appearance at the two extremes of an Italian festa. Amongst these was a

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* Though the above-mentioned four meals are in some places of Athenæus imputed to the Greeks, other passages occur which reduce the number to three, or even two, per diem; the deduction from all which apparent discrepancy must be, that the number of repasts and times for eating varied considerably in Greece during different olympiads. But the difficulty of determining the hour when a meal was taken merely from its name, may be easily seen by a reference to modern customs. Take an English breakfast, for instance, for the comparison: we find under this common term the six o'clock snatch of the common workman, the family meal at nine o'clock, the later repast of the man of fashion, and the post-meridian champagne meal yclept a 'déjeûner à la fourchette.' Now should an author some centuries hence wish to define what was meant by a breakfast in the days of Queen Victoria, he would find the definition exceedingly embarrassing, and be obliged to admit that men broke their fasts at very different hours, though they all used the same word for a meal, differing not more in the viands which composed it than in the various hours at which it was served.

large assortment of shell-fish, designated by the common term *ὄστρακα*, oysters, including not only these and other bivalves, as clams, mussels, cockles, etc., but sea-urchins, limpets, and winkles as well; all the delicacies, in a word, which at present are comprehended under the French heading 'coquillages,' and its Italian equivalent 'frutti di mare,' of which, parenthetically, many admirable specimens still adorn the frescoed walls and mosaic pavements of the houses of Pompeii. Next to these may be mentioned an abundance of sour things, in which not only capers, but pickled eggs and pickled parsnips and turnips, were seldom forgotten. Besides the common vinegar in which these last were soused, there was a strong acetic acid, like our Chili vinegar (*ὄξος ὀξὺ*) also put down as a zest. With these a great number of salt relishes appeared: green olives* (colymbadas), served as now in brine, and many species of salted fish, particularly mackerel and thunny; garum and alec in abundance; a profusion of fresh fruits, a large assortment of fancy breads† to

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* The practice of stuffing enucleated olives with a bit of salt anchovy, and then immersing the fruit in bocals of fresh oil (which is by far the best way of serving them), was not, we believe (though the savoury conception was worthy of the genius of Apicius or Archestratus), known to either the Latins or Greeks.

† The 'artology' of Greece embraces (as every *ology* is bound to do) a great variety of subjects: Ceres was made to assume more 'fancy' shapes than ever Proteus took; and to reckon up and put together all the different breads mentioned by Athenæus would occupy more time than we have just now to spare. Archestratus, in his poem on 'Gastronomy,' enters upon this part of his subject with a dignity quite Homeric:—

> *Πρῶτα μὲν οὖν δώρων μεμνήσομαι ἠϋκόμοιο*
> *Δήμητρος, φίλε Μόσχε· σὺ δ'ἐν φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσιν.*
> The gracious gifts of Ceres ever kind,
> Moschus, I sing; incline both ear and mind,
> Whilst I adventurous knead in ductile verse
> Her plastic progeny, and praise rehearse.

eat with the different relishes; cruets of oxymel for those who wished to gargle preparatory to the coming course;

A great variety of breads at table was so much thought of, that a feast without such an assortment would have been held a failure, for 'the sweet smells of divers breads and cakes are allowed to be the proper perfumes of a banquet room:' and so farinaceously disposed were the guests in general, that the introduction of a cake towards the end of a feast, when every other expedient had failed, would frequently spur a jaded appetite to new efforts and desires. It would be difficult, and, for the reader's sake and our own, we will suppose it quite impossible, to recount the names of all the miscellaneous offspring which issued from the prolific womb of an Athenian oven; their shapes were endless, their complexions very different: some came into the world half baked, others of a proper crasis and solidity; these were fair, those brown; some had a smooth epidermis shining in white-of-egg, others a skin papillated and marred with coriander and poppy seeds, or gashed and cicatrized with slips of dried orange-peel; there was an excellent bread called *ἄρτος ἀγοραῖος*, or market-bread, made of white flour, for the master, and an inferior kind for servants, which the baker charged under the name of *ἄρτος ἀγελαῖος*, *i. e.* herd or slave bread, or the 'Cilician loaf.' The common *pain de ménage* was another, and had a different name, *αὐτόπυρος*, or 'downright bread,' as Pliny renders it. There was also a very digestible loaf (*κριβανίτης*), and one equally famed for disagreeing with the stomach, called (but not often asked for) *ἐγκρύφιος*; there was boletus bread, which had the *pileus* of a bun and the colour of smoked cheese! Ionian rolls *rasped*, *κνηστοὶ*, and hasty cakes, named after the impromptu mode of their fabrication; there was the *ἀρτολάγανον*, a bread in which pepper, wine, and oil were incorporated with the dough; *ἀρτοπτίνος*, a kind of cottage-bread baked in a shape called *ἀρτόπτης*; *ὀβελίας*, 'oublies, or wafers, baked, as now, between opposite plates of metal,'[1] and sold for the small Greek copper coin *ὀβολὸς*, whence their name. The *ἐσχαρίτης*[2] was very like the last in composition, 'but divinely tempered with honey.' Lynceus says that the taste of this, as 'it uncurls in the

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[1] Casaubon.

[2] These dainty Greek wafers certainly formed an exception to the Latin poet's too indiscriminate censure, where he says, 'omne *vafer* vitium!'

various cheeses,* to which we may probably add a spe-

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wine-glass,' is *διακρίστον*, 'thoroughly good:' then there was the *κρίβανον*, or breast-shaped loaf; the *ἀμολγαίη*, or shepherd's goat-milk bread; the *κονδύλη*, made of milk, honey, and cheese; the *τυρονίτης*, recommended for children; and Cyprus bread, which acted, says Eubulus, on a hungry man as the magnet on a needle. The ancients generally ate their bread hot, a practice recommended by the faculty, not on the score of health, but as most agreeable to the palate, and perhaps as not unlikely to bring 'grist to their mill.' We dare not enlarge the catalogue, lest the reader should become crusty over so long a note, but will conclude with a bit of advice from that doughty authority in dough, Archestratus, who says, 'If you want an agreeable succession of fancy breads, you must take a Phœnician or a Lydian baker into your establishment, and you will then have no difficulty in securing a constant supply;' to which Athenæus adds, from his own knowledge, that any Cappadocian baker would give equal satisfaction.

* The ancient cheesemonger kept a large stock in trade: he had cows' milk cheese and ewes' milk cheese, and what is more unusual nowadays, mares' milk cheeses (Hippace), ranged in rows to suit the different tastes of his customers. Some of the former, as the Nemausium, were eaten like our Bath and cream cheeses, fresh; others improved by keeping; some were smoke-dried; Dalmatian cheeses enjoyed a great reputation at Rome, as did also, says Pliny, those of the Centronian and Ligurian provinces; an Apennine cheese, made, like some in Wales, of ewes' and cows' milk mixed, was also in favour; the Bithynian curd was so salt as to require considerable soaking in vinegar before it was fit to be used. The cheeses from France, in Pliny's day, had a physicky flavour, and were therefore, we presume, not much asked for. Lucca, so famous now for its oil, was once famous for the size of its cheeses, which, says Pliny, often reached 'ten stone.' Of Greek cheeses the Sicilian ranked first, and next those from Achaia: they were made of ewes' milk, and called, from the reputation they enjoyed, 'Jove's milk.' Those curd cheeses called 'provature,' or buffalo's eggs, the sale of which is now immense, were probably as well known to ancient as they are to modern Rome. They are formed by first kneading the fresh curd till it has been deprived of all redundant moisture (when it becomes ductile and stringy); afterwards the mass is broken up

cies of subacid *ricotta*, called oxygala,* butter,† and an occasional dish of fresh cicadas, brushed from the tree by means of a taper pole (*καλάμῳ λεπτῷ*) kept for the purpose of this particular *θήρα*, or chase. The Cilicians are said to have crammed so many good things into their introductory course, that a famous ancient gastrologer was wont to affirm that the whole Athenian supper put together was not to be compared to it. The next *entrée* was called *κεφαλὴ δείπνου*, the head or beginning of the

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into fragments of an oval shape, which are thrown into a pan of saline Maremma cream, called conserva; this imparts not only some of its richness to the curd, but also a sufficient impregnation of salt to preserve it for some time; the buffalo's eggs, on removal from the conserva, are hung up in strings for sale, and are ready for immediate use.

* This, Pliny tells us, is formed of ewes' milk after the butter has been removed; the residuum being then heated, it becomes turbid, and this second coagulum, carefully skimmed off, constitutes oxygala. A Roman contadino gave us the following recipe for that most delicate of the products of milk, the modern Roman 'ricotta;' it tallies exactly with the process for procuring the ancient oxygala:—Ewes' milk being coagulated for cheese, as soon as the curd has been removed the remaining fluid is subjected a second time to a slow fire, care being taken that it should not boil; the whey thus heated forms a second softer curd, and to collect the loose coagulum the whole is passed through a rush basket, which retains the solid portion, or 'ricotta' (so called from this supplementary cooking); the thin whey that runs through is given to pigs and horses, who thrive and fatten upon it.

† To disparage butter, we say it is only fit for greasing cart wheels: perhaps, in the early days of the churn, this may have been one of its legitimate uses; it certainly was so with hogs' lard, *axunga;* this word being formed from *axis*, a wheel, and *ungo*, I anoint. Butter, a much later commodity than oil, was first called *oleum lactis*, oil of milk; just as sugar, which of course was not manufactured till long after honey became well known, was first called *mel arundinis*, reed honey. The word butter is derived etymologically from *βοῦς* (as the earliest was made from cows' milk alone), and *τυρὸς*, a coagulum; it appears, however, that other milks were employed occasionally in its fabrication.

supper proper, which, though it contained eggs done in as many ways as now in France, with many other excellent things besides, was but prefatory to something better still, for which all the company took care to keep a corner, and a keen look-out. This grand course, which comprised everything that was costly, exquisite, wonderful, and rare, was usually ushered in with a pomp and grandeur suitable to its importance. As to the bill of fare furnished by the cook, and read out *viâ voce* by the master to the assembled guests, who but a Greek deipnosophist could hope to follow it out, or even venture to guess what particular salt, sour, bitter, peppery, oleaginous, or agrodolce viands were intended under any of the high-sounding items?* In place, therefore, of entering into hopeless particulars, from which neither ourself

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* The above glimpse of the resources of a Greek supper will appear very poor, if contrasted with the glowing accounts transmitted to us by gormandizing poets, of the feasting in the golden age; when, if we may believe their traditions, the supply of victuals and the capacity of the stomach were without limits, the appetite persistent and insatiable, and the whole service of kitchen and sideboard spontaneous, automatic, and well-regulated;

> Withouten hands the glasses fly,
> The dishes at a wish draw nigh,
> And at a wish retire.[1]

Everybody then ordered his dinner, not of the cook, but of obsequious ministering utensils, and self-dressing, self-serving viands.

> I'm hungry, old mahogany, despatch!
> For feasting renovate thy beaming face;
> Come, coziest couch, thy fasting lord convey,
> And place him plunged in cushions at the board;
> Haste, ye Ionian rolls, from th' oven borne
> Hot-rasp'd; and thou, my trusty tray,
> Hie to the kitchen, and return with freight
> Of mince and mattyas, scallops, hash and stew.

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[1] Parnell's 'Fairy Tale.'

nor the reader would rise much the wiser, we would merely observe in general, that though all flesh was there, and none despised, though quadrupeds mustered strong, and there was a *μέγας οὐρανὸς ὀπτανιάων*, or whole 'heaven

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Now he is gone, my well-stored cupboard, ope
Thy doors, set all thy prisoners free!
Fair doyley, dust our noble rhyton out,
And thou, good amphora, be prompt to pour
One long libation down my thirsty throat,
In juice nectareous; door, on oily hinge,
Move noiseless inward to the coming course,
That tracks its fragrant progress through the hall
In daintiest whiffs. And now the phalanx bright
Enters magnificent in silvery sheen:
Avaunt! ye covers, haste to disappear!
And, let yon aviary of roasted birds
Rise from their spinach to our open mouth,
And fluttering through the barrier of our teeth,
There make their nest in emulous array.
And now I've eaten birds and beasts enow,
My fancy roams to fish; sweet conger, come;
And here he comes! but in his haste, half-cook'd.
Go, gyrate, baste thee well, and then return,
Done to a turn, and lying upon beet.

The following passage from Metagenes we will not venture to paraphrase, but give in Mr. Yonge's translation:—

The river Crathis bears down unto us
Huge barley-cakes, self-kneaded and self-baked.
The other river, called the Tiberis,
Rolls on large waves of meat and sausages,
And boiled rays all wriggling the same way;
And all these lesser streamlets flow along
With roasted cuttle-fish, and crabs, and lobsters;
And on the other side with rich black-puddings
And forced-meat stuffings; on the other side
Are the herbs and lettuces, and fried bits of parsley;
Above, fish cut in slices and self-boil'd
Rush to the mouth; some fall before one's feet,
And dainty cheesecakes swim around us everywhere.

of poultry,' both boiled and roast, still it was the flesh of fishes that ever bore away the palm; they were the soul of the supper, and the number of kinds occasionally brought together in one repast was surprisingly great. In reading over various poetic bills of fare preserved by Athenæus, we have verified twenty-six species in one Attic supper, and not less than forty in another. Cuvier, indeed, after much research, arrives at the conclusion that the ancients were acquainted with not less than one hundred and fifty kinds of Mediterranean fish—and if so, with *all* the esculent species at present known to inhabit its waters. On this course being brought in, the appearance of the banquet-room changed, and became much more splendid: the service of hardware made way for one of solid silver; gold bread-baskets, filled with fresh stores of biscuits, wafers, and painted cakes, were handed round; the flames in the replenished lamps shot up with increased brilliancy; new ones were introduced, and the room blazed throughout as if it had been lit with oxygen;* the flower of the youth of both sexes entered, bearing bits of pumice,† drugs against drunkenness,‡ (*μέθης φάρμακα*,) and trays full of chaplets of

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* Dependent lychni laquearibus aureis
Incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.—*Virg.*

† Topers, before they began drinking, were in the habit of swallowing a piece of this porous stone, which, from its thirsty nature, was supposed to enable them to absorb a larger quantity of liquor.

‡ There were many such antidotes in vogue, both in Greece and Italy. 'When a man intends to drink hard,' says Pliny, 'let him take a decoction of rue-leaves, and the wine will not affect his head.' 'If the greatest wine-sop adopt but the precaution of chewing four or five bitter almonds before he begins drinking, he may take liquor to any amount without being the worse for it.' And again, 'If a man drink a decoction of ivy berries, or eat a piece of hog's lung properly cooked, he will not get drunk that day, let him drink what he will.'

saffron, ivy berries, violets, and amaranth,* for the like purpose; some hung up that mystic flower, the present of the god of Love to the god of Silence, intimating that henceforth all the proceedings of the meeting were to be kept inviolable and *sous la rose*; other attendants brought in baskets of many fragrant petals,† to rain upon the couches, floor, and recumbent guests; while more completely to impregnate the air with sweet odours (besides the aroma exhaled from flowers and the yet more costly perfumes brought by the guests), a number of doves,‡ carrying floral essences and extracts under their wings, were let loose to flit up and down the banquet-hall.§ The company now became more animated; the buzz of talking waxed louder and louder every minute; anagrams, conundrums, and various other sorts of *gryphes*,

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* This word comes from *ἀ-μαράινω*, on account of the sobering effects imputed to its petals when placed in contact with the temples.

† At a feast given by Cleopatra to Mark Antony, that Queen paid a talent for rose-petals to cover the floor of the banquet-hall a cubit deep, in order that the guests might tread softly.

‡ The luxurious kings of Cyprus employed these birds to fan them at their meals; which object they attained by anointing their persons, after the manner of rat-catchers, with an unguent wherein was mixed the pulp of a Sicilian berry in request among doves: the doves then, on being let loose, flew straight to the king, on whose person they had no sooner alighted, than driven off by satellites, they attempted to regain their position, and thus provided a charmingly refreshing current of cool air to all in the vicinity.

§ It appears that a number of pigeons are always present in the banquet-hall at the Mansion-house; some Goth, last year, proposed to have them destroyed, but as he was out-voted, and the pretty flutterers remain, we venture to suggest to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen that it would certainly add to the grace of their entertainments, and give them an additionally classic air, were these birds hereafter to be employed as the 'carriers' and dispensers of sweet odours.

were proposed; some were guessed by the Œdipuses at table, whilst salt-and-water was drunk by those Davuses who could not make them out: fables, epigrams, odes, bits of epic or drama were recited by their several authors, as now at a French réunion of literati. The latest news and scandal of the week went round; sometimes *thaumaturgists* (it is a curious coincidence that Roman-catholic *saints* and Greek *conjurors* should have the same name!) stood on their heads and belched forth flames; buffoons come in to make sport; some 'old lady of eighty was persuaded to dance,' and as she gave in, a bevy of young Hebes in arachnean robes made their appearance, whose many twinkling feet, moving to the music as swiftly as the wings of a bird (*ποδωκέας ὄρνιθας ὥς*), added their charm to the entertainment.

Long before this, the 'poets' had 'mounted their horse,' as getting drunk was euphemiously called by this polite people, and held on as long as they could; the ladies meanwhile having eaten such nougats* (*νώγαλα*) and other sweetmeats as the sex was always partial to, began to smile and to wink over 'Venus' milk' (one of their favourite names for wine); while that knowing fellow, *ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς*, the 'Eye' of the table, to whom the 'regna vini' had been committed, glanced up and down the length of the board, to prevent any pause

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* We hardly know whether to include sugar (saccharum) or any true saccharine products as among the sweetmeat luxuries, or *νώγαλα*, of the ancients. From Pliny's account, sugar would seem to have been used rather as a medicine than a *bonne bouche*: his words are, 'Sugar is a produce of Arabia and India, whereof that which comes from India is the best; it is a kind of honey, gathered and candied in certain canes;[1] it is white, like fine gum, brittle between the teeth; the lumps are seldom bigger than the size of a filbert, and *serve only for physic*.'

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[1] So Arrian calls it: *μέλι τὸ καλάμινον τὸ λεγόμενον σάκχαρι*.

in the circulation of wine; and if he saw a gentleman hanging back from doing full honours to a toast, reminded him of his business in three pithy words, *πίθι ἢ ἀπίθι*, 'gulp or go!' a sentence which, heard at suitable intervals, stirred up the whole company to do its best. The gentlemen pledged the ladies *con spirito*, and the ladies, in place of coldly assenting like our own to a 'glass of port if *we* please' (as if, pretty souls, they had a Stoic indifference to it themselves), answered the challenge *con amore*, with a hearty 'good health to you, Sir' (*ζήσειας*; or an acknowledgment *à la* Jenny Wren (*λαμβάνω ἀπὸ σοῦ ἡδέως*), 'I take your offer kind.' The last part of the entertainment was, alas! frequently unfit for description. The ladies not retiring to tea did not keep the men sober, nor, if report says true, even themselves; the pretty 'gold grasshoppers' nodded fearfully in the green foil foliage of their tiaras; beautiful dresses and ivory shoulders became stained, like Horace's Lydia's, with wine-spots; and many a Cyrus laid hands on a fair lock of hair feebly guarded, and then surrendered up his face to the will of gentle Amazons, who before sitting down had taken due care, like her, properly to 'pare their nails.'

In the polite days of Greek feasting, the guests attended studiously to the toilet; each went gaily dressed, for who ever sat down to a feast in black (*quis unquam cœnavit atratus*)?* All were highly pomatumed, and the two sexes (like night-blooming flowers) might be distinguished in the dark by a different perfume.

At table they seem to have washed their hands† as

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* Cicero.

† As fingers were in vogue long before forks, or the general use of spoons (*μύστρα*) or knives, and everything was conveyed direct from the hand to the mouth, this practice was certainly not more nice than wise and needful; unless indeed in such a frugal

often as the Jews; the first cleansing took place just before sitting down to the proœmium, and consisted of dry-rubbing the fingers with bread-crumbs, which were then thrown to the dogs, a custom perhaps alluded to by the Syrophœnician woman, 'the dogs eat the crumbs under their master's table;' a second ablution took place when the first tables and dishes had been simultaneously removed; 'epulæ mensæque remotæ;' and the washing apparatus was again introduced in the last course, when a new set of 'well-sponged and polished tables' made their appearance:—

Οἱ δ' αὖτε σπόγγοισι πολυτρήτοισι τράπεζας νίζον.*

These Grecian feasts were at first confined to few personages; gradually, however, the numbers increased, and at length became as the sand (*ψαμμακόσιοι*), till the crowd grew so inconveniently large (from five to six persons being often squeezed into one couch or bed) that at Athens the whole party was limited by law to thirty; this restriction however was not imposed so much to secure social comfort, as with a view to avert political danger to the state, and to prevent domestic conspiracies from hatching in the midst of such turbulent and overgrown assemblies.

Besides the more ordinary improprieties resulting from excess displayed at a Greek feast, the Romans further disgraced their entertainments by a vile system of favouritism and partiality shown to the different guests at table. This conduct seems to have approached very nearly to that of the kings of Parthia (*vide* Athenæus, lib. v.), who were graciously pleased to condescend to throw scraps of food to those they called friends lying

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repast as consisted of but one dish, when the hands were not washed. 'Prandium sine mensâ, per quod non sunt lavandæ manus.'—*Seneca.*

* Homer.

like hungry dogs on the watch at their feet, and each hoping for his mouthful of offal. The same intolerable arrogance and insolence on one side, and the same base servility on the other, characterized those Roman feasts, where some great entertainer invited his poorer friends and hangers-on to meet wealthy guests—these to bait, and those to be baited. Juvenal gives us an account of one of these banquets, with which, if the reader compares the French Juvenal's close imitation, adapted to a feast given in the reign of Louis XIV., he will find at least as many points of favourable contrast as of unfavourable resemblance; the censor of Mount Parnassus, who is careful to note every delinquency of his host, cannot pretend that he admits Ajaxes or Benjamins to run away with more than their share of the dinner, or that the servants do not pay equal attention to the wants of every one present; and whilst the worst offences committed by the Gallic entertainer are all unintentional, general, and culinary, those of the Roman are premeditated, pointed against individuals, and extended far beyond the dishes:—

> The day, the hour arrives, the time to dine;
> But, gods! at such a feast! and for the wine!
> So thick and turbid you might try in vain
> Through coarsest wool the feculence to strain.*
> So crude and fiery,† that one soon shall view
> No longer guests but Corybants in you.

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* Of ancient-wine strainers (Gr. *ἴθμοι*, Lat. *cola vinaria*) several specimens may be seen in the cabinet of the King of Naples: burnt bread was sometimes used 'to get rid of the naughty flavour of the lees;' that was the more refined plan, but Vicnto's poor guest was doomed, it seems, to swallow his 'black draught' in all its unmitigated nastiness.

† The client's haustus was, no doubt, some common, vile Sabine stuff, corresponding to the modern red liquid retailed at an exceedingly low price at Rome, which, little better than thickened

The squabbling prelude is perform'd; and now,
While the stain'd napkin wipes your bleeding brow,
Swift flies the ponderous pitcher, war for war,
'Midst volleys of Saguntum's flinty jar;
A well-fought fight between the hapless guest
And the rude slaves that tend upon the feast;
And while the noxious poison heats the veins
Of poor retainers, and disturbs their brains,
He quaffs the produce of some vintage rare,
When rough and bearded consuls fill'd the chair;*
Or that from grapes, which haply might produce,
Pending the social war, their precious juice;
But not one cup will generously send
To warm the bowels of his humble friend.
In Virro's hand, much-flatter'd guest, behold
Its surface rough with beryls chased in gold;
The amber goblet, which the touch profane
Of thy nefarious paw shall never stain!
To count the gems a saucy slave stands by,
And marks your sharpen'd nails with curious eye.
Excuse his freedom, and, discreet, forbear
To handle much an emerald so rare,
Grasp your four-snouted, crack'd, and mended glass,
Drink if you can, but let your goblet pass.
Whilst with excess should Virro's stomach glow,
He'll quaff a tankard cold as Getic snow.†

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sloe-juice in flavour, and apparently of little strength, often leads, owing to the excitable nature of Southern temperaments, to brawls and bloodshed, like that mentioned in the text.

* The ancients valued old wines yet more than we do, and not without reason, since all their wines were put by unstrained, and it took a considerable time before they had deposited their feculence and become fit to drink. We read the following comment on this in Ecclesiasticus: 'A new friend is as new wine; when it is *old* thou shalt drink it with *pleasure*.'

† This practice was considered the height of extravagance. 'Sparta banished all the sellers of ointment,' says Seneca, bidding them begone with speed out of the country, 'How, then, would she have dealt with our keepers of ice-houses and dealers in ice?' asks he; or have thought of us northerns, we may ask, who, feeling nothing of the inconvenience of southern heat, have formed

Nor viler wines alone are kept for you,
My friend, you drink inferior water too.*
Then, for the service, at *his* elbow see
The very flower of Asian puberty;
Thy Ganymede some gaunt Getulian boor,
Or hideous, leering, bony-finger'd Moor,
At whom you'd start when all around is still,
Amid the tombs that crown the Latian hill;
The scoundrel hands you crusts you scarce can break,
Hard, musty lumps, which make your grinders ache.†

companies to fetch ice-blocks, for our every-day comfort, all the way from the Wenham Lake?

* This was too bad in a metropolis bubbling everywhere with supplies, and surrounded on all sides by aqueducts;

'Queen of the fountain'd cities, eloquent in waters,'

as a friend has very happily styled her in an hydraulic ode.

† The Romans do not appear to have been so famous for the products of the oven as the Greeks, *e. g.* there was not a baker in Rome for the first five hundred and eighty years of its annals; and Pliny speaks of such refinements as the various incorporations of eggs, milk, and butter with dough, as suited only to those nations who, not being troubled with wars, can find leisure to invent and contrive such luxuries. Agreeably to this, most of the best loaves for table or kitchen had foreign, and not Roman names, which supposes either that the bakers of such loaves or else the flours were foreign originally. Thus Apicius, giving a recipe for making a complex hotchpotch, *en Charlotte*, called 'Salacacabia,' begins—'*Panem Alexandrinum crucabis*,' take an Alexandrian loaf and hollow it out; and in the composition of a kindred dish he recommends Picentine bread. Martial also speaks highly of Picentine Ceres (*Ceres Picentina*). Sidonius Apollinaris celebrates Lydian bread; and many of the other kinds mentioned by Pliny have Greek appellations. He further acquaints us that there were three principal sorts baked in Rome, to suit as many different classes of the community: one for the Senate, composed of flour fine as the finest *French* sieves could sift it; another variety, of a far more homely but very wholesome bread, called, like our own, and for the same reason, *seconds*, for the bourgeoisie; a third, which corresponded to the Greek 'herd bread,' assigned to the plebs, or multitude; and a fourth, made

But for the Virros keeps a special store
Of loaves Cribrarian, made of whitest flour;
From bread like that thy swift right-hand restrain,
Or, dost thou venture, thou hast snatch'd in vain.
Wilt thou be pleased once more, bold guest, to see
The colour of the *bread* design'd for thee;
Shouldst move a lip in trust of fancied claims
Of Roman freedom and three Roman names?
Go quick, and cool thy courage in the street,
Or stay, and kicks and cuffs like Cacus meet.
And thou deserv'st them all; thy host is wise,
If such a host thou know'st not to despise.
Who can bear all things, all things ought to bear;
Tarry a little longer, and he'll dare,
Poor humble slave, thy shaven crown to smite;
And thou shalt bear the blow, perhaps invite,
Think nothing hard, thy back to scourges lend,
Worthy of such a feast and such a friend.

---

of barley, which was still coarser, a sort of convict bread, given to gladiators—hence called *hordiarii*, *i. e.* barley-men—and to soldiers who had lost their standards in battle: it would be in strict keeping with the rest of his fare to suppose that Vicnto baited his poor client upon this last. The Romans were by no means so nice as we are with regard to the purity of the flour, provided the loaf looked white and fair at table. Pliny, having spoken of the mixture of chalk as conducive to this end, adds the following curious passage by way of exemplification:—'Now this chalk occurs in great abundance on the side of a hill called Leucogæum, or white earth, which lies between Puteoli and Naples, of which the Neapolitans made good account in the days of Augustus Cæsar; for when that Emperor first colonized Capua with Roman subjects, he decreed to pay them from the treasury the sum of twenty thousand denarii for the use of this chalk hill,' without which adulteration, the bakers of Capua, as elsewhere, seem to have insinuated that it was quite impossible to make good *furmety*.

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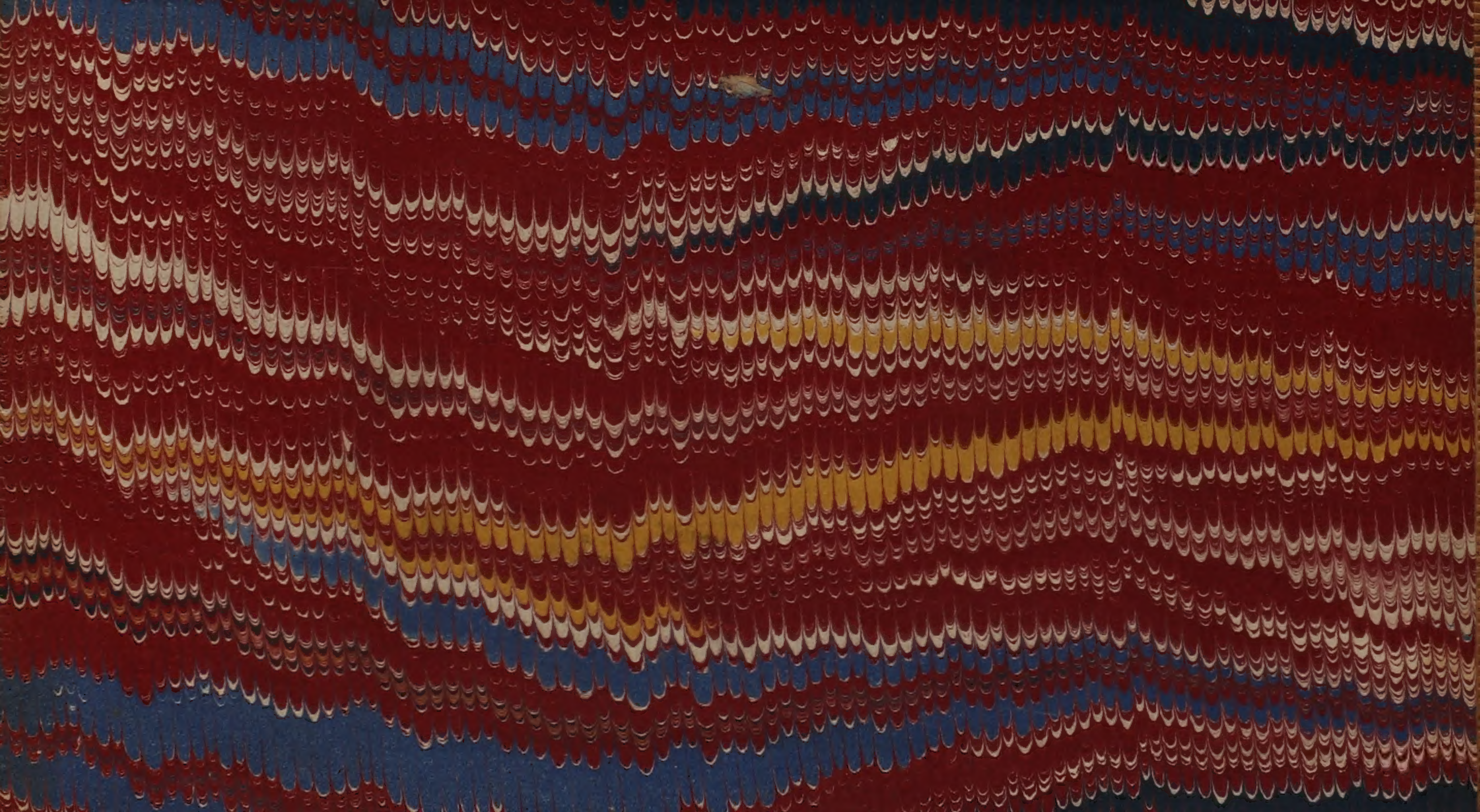
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